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CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XLIII, NO. 23. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1915. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS

IN THE HIDDEN CITY

Or, The Finger of Fate - - By C. Mackie

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CHAPTER I.

IT WAS the close of a blazing hot day in Shanghai, and Roy Fenton left the office of the bank where he was employed and hastened to his hotel for a bath and a change of linen. When he came down, cool and refreshed, and exceedingly trim in his white linen suit made by a fashionable Chinese tailor, he paused in the door of the dining-room and frowned. His own special table in the bay window overlooking the Bund was occupied by two newcomers—a distinguished-looking American of about fifty and a rarely beautiful girl, evidently his daughter. A liner arrived from San Francisco that afternoon, and as a consequence the dining-room was

crowded with an influx of travelers; that explained the occupation of Roy's private table, and shrugging his shoulder at his own ill-nature he crossed the room and sat down in the chair which his favorite waiter drew out.

The American shot a cold glare at the young man and the girl lifted frightened violet eyes that scanned his face wistfully. A soft color flooded her delicate skin when his cool gray eyes met her glance. Roy was thrilled strangely at that passing glance and he studied the menu closely to cover his confusion.

The older man was neglecting his dinner and staring angrily out of the window. His thick white brows beetled over hard blue eyes, and the white mustache and imperial, which gave him rather an unusual air, could not conceal the cruelty of the mouth or the harsh lines of the handsome countenance. He was immaculately attired, and on the little finger of one sun-browned hand was a curious ring of green jade.

On Roy Fenton's little finger was a similar ring. The instant the stranger's eye rested on it he turned fiercely to the young man.

"Who are you, sir?" he demanded curtly.

Roy's eyebrows lifted, and he was about to make a brusque reply when the girl dropped her handkerchief to the floor between them.

"May I trouble you to pick up my handkerchief?" she asked Roy, and her glance was so significant and beseeching that he instantly bent and lifted the delicate bit of linen and lace. As he stooped he noticed that some words were penciled across one corner.

So distinct were these words that he could not fail to read them and be startled by their import:

"Be careful. I need your help!"

"Thank you," said the girl, gently, as he returned the handkerchief to her with the message folded carefully within.

Roy turned to the man with his winning smile. "You asked me a question, sir?"

The other man, who had not noticed the swift byplay, nodded. "I ask your name."

Roy deliberately drew down his card-case, extracted a card, and laid it beside the other's plate. The other grasped it eagerly.

"Roy Galbraith Fenton," he read, with a relieved look at Roy. "I am Alexander Smith of New York. This is my niece, Miss Corwin. Alice, let me introduce Mr. Fenton—of Shanghai?"

Roy bowed in response to the introduction as well as the question.

"At present of Shanghai, but I sail for home tomorrow," he explained.

"You are going home—to America? How fortunate you are!" cried Alice Corwin.

"You are homesick for the land of the Stars and Stripes?" asked Roy, sympathetically. "Well, I've been homesick for it for seven years. I'm mighty glad to be going home."

"You've been here seven years?" demanded Mr. Smith, sharply. "Then you must know the country hereabouts?"

"Rather well. I have spent most of my vacations in trying to find a cool spot in summer. Now I know that Shanghai, with her modern city comforts, including iced water and electric fans, is the coolest spot in China, and I take my vacations in winter."

"Do you know of a place called Wung Ho?" asked Smith.

Roy was distinctly startled by the question.

"Wung Ho?" he stammered. "There IS such a place—not far from some large city——" His voice trailed into silence.

Alexander Smith regarded him keenly and then uttered a harsh laugh as he drew a case from his pocket and extracted from it a bit of tissue paper which unfolded into a map traced coarsely in India ink.

"Near some large city!" he repeated mockingly: "Near the city of Shanghai itself, Mr. Fenton! Odd that you should have lived so near it for seven years and still be uncertain of its whereabouts!"

Roy controlled his temper with difficulty. "It is a place that is not often named in public," he said with emphasis.

"And why not?"

"Because it is not safe to do so."

"Pooh!" laughed the other, returning the map to his pocket. "I am surprised that you entertain any fear of these yellow men. They run like rats at the sight of a gun."

"They are brave enough—I know that. In the meantime I would suggest that you refrain from discussing the place you mentioned in public. All the waiters here are Chinese, and the place you named is not supposed to exist."

"Well, I am satisfied that it does—and I am the person who will actually put it on the map!" declared Smith, energetically.

"I wish you success," said Roy dryly, as Wah Lee placed coffee before him. He lifted his eyes and met the panic-stricken ones of Alice Corwin. He remembered her plea for help and he was puzzled. Perhaps he could have a word with her after dinner, and if she really needed assistance he would recommend her to the care of his friends, the Dormans. Mrs. Dorman was an American woman and the kindest soul in the world.

The three walked out to the lobby together, and Mr. Smith stepped over to the cigar stand. Alice Smith drew close to Roy and spoke rapidly under her breath.

"Mr. Fenton—my life is in danger—that man is not my uncle—he is no relation. Help me, or I am lost!"

"Do not fear," said Roy, gently. "I will help you, if I have to remain here the rest of my life!"

He had made this rash promise—and his steamer for home was waiting down the river. And as if to emphasize that fact, the hotel clerk called across to him:

"Mr. Fenton, the Casperia sails at dawn!"

"Thank you," said Roy, quietly, but he knew, and the frightened girl beside him knew, that it would sail without him.

CHAPTER II.

ALEXANDER SMITH joined them, his blue eyes alertly watching both the girl and the young man whom she scarcely knew, yet who had promised to shield her from danger.

"Well, Mr. Fenton," he said cordially, "it has been a pleasure to meet you, but I suppose you will be sailing in the morning?"

"The Casperia sails at dawn," said Roy, quietly, for he realized that it would not be safe to let this man know that he did not intend to go home.

"It seems to be a case of 'hail and farewell,'" went on Mr. Smith, genially. "Alice and I are weary after the long voyage and glad enough to retire early. So we bid you good night—and bon voyage, Mr. Fenton."

Roy went through his farewells with a good grace and presently Smith and Miss Corwin vanished in the ascending elevator, while Roy wandered into the smoking-room for a quiet hour before retiring.

He was recalling the events of the evening, which had led up to his abandoning his long-anticipated return to the United States, when Wah Lee, who served his table in the restaurant, came padding over the polished floor. Wah Lee looked furtively, bent over Roy for an instant, and in that instant had transferred a small envelope from his capacious sleeve to the young American's hand.

"Would likee dlink, Mister Fenton?" he asked blandly.

"A glass of Vichy, please, Wah Lee," said Roy and his hand transferred a shining silver dollar into the yellow palm.

"Tiankee, sir," hissed the Chinese, as he vanished.

He appeared again with the tray con-[illegible]ing bottle and glasses, and again [illegible]ished as miraculously—much like a benignant fairy in pigtail and white linen jacket. Roy poured himself a drink, then leisurely taking the note from his pocket, scanned the unfamiliar chirography, evidently that of a woman and hastily penned. Within the envelope was a short note:

> "Dear Mr. Fenton: Mr. Smith suspects that I have appealed to you for help. We are to leave the hotel before dawn and I am sure that he is goin to the place called Wung Ho—and I am afraid—afraid! I cannot tell you more—only save me! A.C."

"The deuce!" ejaculated Roy, sitting up very straight. "So he is bent upon mischief. But Wung Ho——What can it all mean? To go there means death and torture—preferably death! Is the man mad?

"It will never do to let her go with him—yet I cannot prevent it—I have no right—I do not even know the important circumstances of the case. But she says he is not related to her—yet why is she with him? I wonder——I have it!" He started for the elevator, the unfinished sentence completing itself in his mind: "That disguise I used when I tracked Lee at the time he was robbing the bank—he never suspected I was not born and bred a Chinaman; and I will get Wah Lee to help me. His reward will be enough to set him up with a fish stall—the ambition of his life!

"Good thing my trunks haven't gone down yet," he mused, as he walked up to the desk.

In five minutes he had informed the manager that he had decided to leave some of his trunks behind, and these were to be stored at the hotel until called for. Then he sent a couple of steamer trunks containing unimportant wearing apparel down to the jetty to be transferred to the Casperia, which was lying in the stream several miles below Shanghai, and found himself in his apartment quizzically surveying some garments spread upon his bed.

He had a short interview with Wah Lee and some money changed hands. Then Wah Lee went down and picked a quarrel with another servant and was instantly discharged by the management. Far from being downcast by this episode, Wah Lee grinned happily and vanished for a period in the direction of the city where he had his humble quarters.

The great City of the Model Settlements was very quiet when Alexander Smith descended the stairs followed by his niece. Beyond small leather bags carried by each, the two were empty-handed. Alice was wrapped in a long dark cloak, and her beautiful face was heavily veiled.

Mr. Smith paid his bill, and explaining to the surprised manager that they were responding to the urgent entreaties of friends who had a bungalow out on the Bubbling Well Road and desired them to stop there, he added:

"They were to send a carriage for us."

"A carriage has just driven up," returned the manager. "But, pardon me, Mr. Smith, is it not rather an unusual hour to depart? The outskirts of the city are not free from footpads at dawn."

But Alexander Smith was ready with a plausible explanation. "Our friends are leaving at dawn for a hunting trip into the country; we want to join them in time to accompany them."

The manager bowed them to the door, but when he came back there was a puzzled frown on his face.

"But this isn't the hunting season," he muttered perplexedly. "And I wonder why the girl appeared so frightened? Fenton seems to know them. I will ask him before he goes."

But he did not see Roy Fenton again for many weeks—not because Roy sailed on the Casperia, but because he was involved in the most dangerous mission of his rather adventurous life. And all for a girl whom he scarcely knew—save that she was the only girl he had ever met who had stirred his heart; and for whom he was ready to lay down his life without other reward than her grateful smile and the warm clasp of her little hands.

As the carriage rolled silently away on rubber-tired wheels, two forms darted out from a dark doorway, and seizing hold of the back, ran after the vehicle with padded feet that made no sound on the cobblestones.

The driver was a Chinaman from a nearby livery stable. Wah Lee, trailing on behind, whispered this to his companion. Roy, dressed so that he looked like Wah Lee's twin brother, listened and formulated a plan.

The carriage turned into the Ningpo Road and went south for some distance, then it turned into the Bubbling Well Road, at last stopping before a bungalow hidden among a dense growth of pines. Roy and his companion concealed themselves in the thick hedge, and heard Alexander Smith dismissing the carriage. He told the man that they had arrived at their destination. But after the carriage had driven away, he showed a singular reluctance to enter the gate.

"Mr. Smith," said Alice, haughtily, "how much longer must I wait before——"

Her voice was suddenly muffled, and Roy saw that the man had clapped his hand across her lips.

"Be still!" hissed Smith. If you value your miserable life, do not raise an outcry now! We are not going to stop here—the end of our journey is many hours distant. We are waiting here for three men I have employed to guide us."

Roy longed to leap from his hiding-place and deliver the girl from Smith's hands, but he knew that it would be better to wait and resuce her when he was, perhaps, better justified. When he understood Smith's motives and knew his plans, then he could deliver Alice Corwin from whatever danger threatened her. Meantime, policy demanded that he wait and watch, and if possible attach himself to their party. In order to do that, they must first dispose of the three men whom Alexander Smith was waiting for.

It was the darkest hour before the dawning of another day when there came the sound of bare feet running. Roy and his companion slipped out of the hedge and concealed themselves around a bend in the road. Trot—trot—trot came the sound of running feet. Wah Lee leaped up and then back again with a writhing form in his arms. Roy followed suit. In a trice there were three silent Chinese on the other side of the hedge.

Roy and Wah Lee turned and ran pantingly up to the waiting and unsuspecting Americans standing in the shadows by the gate. Alexander Smith and his companion had heard no sound of that silent struggle in the dust of the road. The former surprised Roy by addressing them in Chinese:

"I thought there were to be three of you," he growled.

"We are only two—but we are mighty men," answered Wah Lee, glibly.

"Well, hurry along then—there is no time to lose, if we are to reach Wung Ho before sunrise!"

CHAPTER III.

ROY head Wah Lee's gasp of surprise when Alexander Smith mentioned the name of Wung Ho. But the Chinaman was crafty enough to conceal his emotion, and with merely a brief inquiry as to whether the honorable foreigner expected to take a woman along, Wah Lee grunted a command for them to follow him, and trotted ahead. It was Roy's place to follow behind as a rear guard for the little party.

They hurried along the beautiful road, past handsome estates hidden among the trees, occasionally meeting a straggling Chinaman, who invariably stood stock-still and watched them until they disappeared in the gloom.

They passed over bridges that led across noisome creeks whose outlet was the turgid yellow tidal river which flows past Shanghai to the sea; and always they drew nearer to that ancient native city of Shanghai which squats within high walls, a mystery of myriad streets and alleys, and with a teeming population of Chinese, many of whom have never passed through the gates into the newer city built up by the foreigners who have settled in that part of China.

Roy Fenton's brain was busy with many problems as he followed the three—the Chinese guide, the lovely, frightened girl, and the resolute, dare-devil man.

Who but a madman would dream of piercing that Hidden City whose only inhabitants were members of a mysterious secret society or "tong?" No one was supposed to recognize its existence; no one was supposed to know that entrance to the Hidden City lay through the Temple of a Thousand Prayers, and only the most rigid inspection permitted passage through its underground portals.

Yet, among the few foreigners who had chanced to become aware of the place, was Roy Fenton. The secret had been whispered to him by a foreigner who was dying from his experiences in the forbidden place; and the jade stone ring upon Roy's little finger had been given to him by that same man, Jason, only a short week ago. To-night, the first time he had worn it, Alexander Smith, fresh from the United States and claiming this to be his first visit to China, had been oddly attracted by it.

Had the jade stone ring any significance to one who wanted to enter the Hidden City? Had Jason brought it out of the city? These questions dazed Roy by the suddenness with which they crowded his mind.

He slipped the ring from his finger and put it in an inner pocket of his shirt. Alexander Smith might see the ring and become suspicious and finally pierce Roy's disguise. And if Roy was to help Alice Corwin, he must keep his identity secret from the American.

"Why is he taking her there?" rang the question in Roy's ears, and because he could find but one answer, which he refused to believe, he was compelled to watch and wait.

It was not yet dawn when they passed through the dark gate of the ancient city. They hurried along the narrow, foul-smelling streets, following Wah Lee into a narrow alley that finally debouched upon the street where was the Temple of Ten Thousand Prayers.

Roy wondered if the Chinaman would really lead them into the dangerous place—would not he sacrifice his life in doing so? Or would he gain prestige by bringing three more victims whose knowledge of the Hidden City had spelled their death warrants? It was dangerous for one to know about Wung Ho—even to mention its name—to recognize its existence.

Now they had reached the Temple of Ten Thousand Prayers, had passed through its carved and latticed door, and were in the dim obscurity of its interior. The smoke of incense filled their nostrils, in the dim distance loomed the gigantic form of an idol before which smoldered joss sticks in many jars.

Wah Lee dodged around in the shadows, and the three followed him, Alexander Smith at his heels and the girl gradually drawing nearer to Roy, who had adopted the name of Ping Soo with his Chinese dress.

They passed behind a carved screen near the altar, and saw Wah Lee lift a stone slab from the pavement, disclosing a steep flight of steps running down into deeper darkness. He motioned them down the stairs, and Alexander Smith went first, Alice followed, and Roy came after.

Roy stood there, his head on a level with the floor of the temple, waiting to utter a word to Wah Lee, when,

"MUGGINS TARNEY'S DOPE; or, BREAKING THE DAM AT QUEEN COVE," a thrilling railroad story, by Alvah Milton Kerr, in next week's Ledger. "A DUEL OF DETECTIVES; or, A CONFLICT IN CLEWS," to follow. Look sharp and don't miss them

without warning, the stone slab came crashing down into place, leaving the three foreigners alone to face torture, perhaps death, before the underground gates of the Hidden City.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the stone slab of the temple pavement came crashing down on Roy Fenton's head, the force and the movement sent him staggering down the narrow steps, where he fell in a heap at the bottom.

To his surprise neither Alexander Smith nor Alice came to his assistance. He rose to his feet and became aware that he was alone; in the distance was the sound of footfalls echoing through stone passages. They were fleeing from him—why?

Had they discovered his identity through some careless utterance on his part when he fell down the steps, or was Alexander Smith taking the opportunity to spirit the girl away?

The last thought galvanized Roy to instant action. He extended his hands, felt a damp stone wall on either side, and set off down the passage at a swinging gait, his outstretched arms touching the walls, his padded shoes making no sound on the stone slabs of the pavement. Suddenly the passage turned and he followed, his hands still guiding the way.

Ahead of him he heard the running feet of the man and the girl, and once or twice he heard her agonized voice appealing to the man to pause for a moment. There was the sound of curses as Smith evidently stopped and assisted the girl in their flight.

"We are followed!" he cried roughly. "You will be the means of my death!"

The girl laughed hysterically in response, and her cries were instantly hushed. Then Roy heard her broken sobs, and he longed for a hand-to-hand encounter with the man who was forcing her to certain death.

As he panted on in the rear, striving to keep out of hearing of the two, Roy marveled that Alexander Smith should have actual knowledge of the way to the Hidden City, or was this blind groping-work on his part, now that Wah Lee had so mysteriously failed the expedition? And what of Ping Soo? Had they forgotten Roy, in his Chinese disguise? Or was Smith trying to outdistance him and enter the Hidden City alone?

"He will never come out alive!" he predicted gloomily.

He stopped suddenly and became aware that the noise of the running feet had ceased. Dead silence covered the underground place. He crept forward inch by inch until he rounded another turn in the passage and saw Alexander Smith dimly visible in the uncertain light of a flickering match.

The man was standing with walls and comparing them with the tissue paper map that Roy had seen in the hotel restaurant. He covering shadow beside him must be poor Alice, worn and fainting with the events of the morning.

Roy felt in his blouse for the revolver he had placed there, and its cold contact was very reassuring in that time and place. That would need its assistance he felt very sure.

Alexander Smith lighted match after match, and Roy heard his muttered curses as he searched the walls for some token of the entrance to the Hidden City. At last he sighed with relief and tossed the last match away.

"Come," he said harshly to the girl. "I've found the hinged door." Hanged if I ever dreamed these Chinamen were so crafty!"

There was the faint, muffled sound, as if a bell had chimed beyond the wall, and Roy crept forward, ready to accompany them through the gates to the underground city. Alexander Smith, intent upon watching the wall before him, did not notice Roy's approach, nor did he notice Alice's start of surprise when Roy pressed close to her and whispered in her ear.

"Courage!" was the word, as whispered before he withdrew into the deeper shadows.

It was like perpetual night down here under the Temple of Ten Thousand Prayers, and when there came a grating sound from the wall, and a flood of lantern light that came through the first crack was dazzling to the eyes.

A thrill of voice asked a question in Chinese. Smith answered it in the same language, and when there was hesitation he extended his hand, upon the little finger of which gleamed a jade ring.

There was no hesitation now. The door opened wider. Alexander Smith pushed Alice through the aperture, and followed her so hastily that he almost knocked the lantern from the hand of the guardian of the gate.

It fell to the ground and was extinguished, and while the guardian cackled shrill curses on the head of the stranger, Roy took advantage of the darkness and noise to slip through the open door into the Hidden City.

He groped with his hands, felt the friendly proximity of a stone pillar, hid behind it, and was grateful for its shelter when Alexander Smith struck a match and relighted the lantern of the guardian of the gate.

And while Smith was lighting the lantern, something was happening to the surprised guardian. Out of the velvet-black darkness, Roy's athletic form hurled itself at the stooping Chinaman, crushed him to the ground, swiftly bound his hands with his own queue, stuffed a handkerchief in his mouth, and was ready to take the lighted lantern from Alexander Smith's hand when it was ready.

And Alexander Smith, who had not actually seen Roy in the darkness of the morning flight, accepted him as the guardian of the gate, and unsuspectingly followed him through the streets of the Hidden City.

CHAPTER V.

THIS was a critical moment in Roy Fenton's life. He did not in the least know where he was, save that he suspected that he was actually in the Hidden City. He knew no password of the secret order; Alexander Smith had gained admittance by extending his

Alexander Smith pushed Alice through.

hand—the ring of course! Roy laughed to himself as he felt for his pocket and replaced the jade ring upon his finger.

If the jade ring on Smith's finger had gained entrance for that roving American, its replica which Roy wore would perform the same service. With his knowledge of Chinese, he might be able to wriggle his way through this adventure as he had through many others. There was the girl to save, and the trusty weapon pressing against his breast might prove the solution to some problems.

Alexander Smith was speaking in Chinese to Roy. His speech was a strange polyglot of the court language and the vernacular of the Shanghai district, but Roy was able to comprehend his meaning.

"I am directed to the presence of the Great One," muttered Smith, as he supported Alice along the street. "It is in the Place of Waterfalls."

"It is understood, honorable lord," replied Roy, meekly.

"Where in thunder is the Place of Waterfalls?" he asked himself blankly, for there was no evidence of anything save a labyrinth of passages cut out of earth and stone, with doorways here and there closed by doors of heavy wood.

The "streets" were deserted. It is probable that many members of the secret society had gone above ground to their daily labors in the city. Some of them perhaps found their work in the Model Settlements, and went to and fro, waiting upon the foreign devils in restaurants, or pulling the speedy little rickshaws, or trotting to and fro on the wharves unloading the vessels that came up the river. It was a silent city, a dead city, a rather unpleasant, grewsome place in which to bring a beautiful young girl whose proper environment was the security of a happy home in the West.

Roy's anger rose as he pudded through the throughfares of the Hidden City. He could have killed Smith with his bare hands, so mighty was his wrath against the man, whose purpose he did not even know, but whose actions were condemnatory.

"The Place of Waterfalls," he kept muttering over and over again. "If I could only meet a harmless citizen of this charming city I would choke the information out of him!"

And in the distance he saw a shadowy form that might be the source of information of which he needed.

"Wait here for a moment and I will return—I must get another light," he said to Smith, and he darted away toward the object he had seen.

It was an old, old man sweeping the streets with a wispy broom and gathering the debris into a flat basket.

"I forget the way to the Place of Waterfalls," he mused in the old man's ear. "Tell me, Ancient One, or the Great One will visit vengeance upon you!"

The sweeper was evidently impressed by the threat, for he extended a skinny forefinger and pointed down a wider street than Roy had noticed herefore.

"The Place of Waterfalls is at the end of the street and it is a weary distance," he croaked dismally.

Roy pressed a silver dollar into the withered hand, and it is very doubtful if the astonished ancient remembered what happened after that. It is certain that he did not notice Roy rejoin two dark forms and the three proceed at a rapid pace down the street between the doors that opened into—what?

Who might guess what lay behind those doors? Not the three Americans hastening toward the Place of Waterfalls—the place where the Great One was waiting for Alexander Smith.

The street was wider than the others they had traversed, and it led for a long distance without break or turning. Roy stumbled into a deep rut and recognized it as the track of a wheelbarrow —the way to the Place of Waterfalls must be long if it required that popular Chinese vehicle as a means of transportation!

On past the hundreds of closed doors—each one of which opened a tiny crack as they passed—they went until at last they came to the end of the street. The end of the street was a blank wall and in the wall was a wide door of cedar wood with wrought iron bands stretched across it.

"This is the Place of Waterfalls," said Roy to Alexander Smith, and as if the words were the passport to the hidden place of the mysterious Great One, the portal swung inward, admitting the three to the dim gloom of a temple. A shaven priest poked his head curiously at them and Roy took a chance and muttered a question:

"The Great One?"

The priest shuffled across the floor, opened another and led the way down a shallow flight of steps. As they went, Roy became conscious of a sound that grew in volume as they descended. It became a continuous roar when they reached an underground room which contained three doors.

On the other side of one door came the sound of falling waters—that was the roar they had heard. From another door came the murmur of voices, and from a third, the tinkling of Chinese musical instruments.

"The Great One waits behind the door," said the priest, as he threw open one of the doors.

Alexander Smith paused on the threshold, and well he might be impressed by the sight.

Within was a handsome chamber whose walls were carved panels of sandalwood and ivory and ebony whose ceiling was beamed with teakwood and whose furniture was precious ebony and massive teak inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl. Rich rugs covered the stone floors and jeweled lanterns swung from the beams, emitting vari-hued rays of light. The air was heavy with the mingled smell of incense and opium.

At the right of the door was a massive throne of ivory and ebony, and seated on the throne was a Chinaman of gigantic stature and most commanding presence. On his head was a mandarin's cap of white velvet, and the button that finished it was a sparkling diamond as large as a walnut.

On either side of this personage stood a guard dressed in the uniform of a Chinese soldier of the olden time; the walls, hung with beautiful embroideries, seemed to reflect instantly as the three strangers entered the room.

Alexander Smith went first, dropping his long cloak as he advanced, and Roy was astonished to see that he was garbed in a rich Chinese dress of blue brocaded satin. His costume contrasted oddly with his Caucasian features and bright blue eyes.

At the same moment Alice slipped off her enveloping cape and tossed aside her veil as if the heat of the place oppressed her. Instead of the trim figure in smartly cut American clothes, Roy saw a dainty Chinese maiden—but no, it was Alice herself in the gown of a Chinese girl, and vastly becoming it was to her. Roy thought, even as he hated the revelations. Her dusky hair had been brushed into a glossy chignon in which were thrust jeweled pins. He would scarcely have recognized her had he met her unexpectedly.

While Alexander Smith made respectful salutation before the Great One, Alice glanced wildly about the room as if seeking protection. Her eyes met Roy's and remained fixed upon him. Her gaze, sharpened by the necessity of the moment, penetrated his disguise, and the disappointment she had felt in what she thought to be his desertion of her cause, was more than atoned for by her delight in the discovery that he had been beside her all the way to the Hidden City and was with her now in the Place of Waterfalls.

She moved nearer to him, and her voice came in a sighing message:

"You! I am so glad!"

This thrilling story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in this column. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a dollar immediately. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Good Advice.

Some time ago Smith was rambling down town when he met Jones. Jones was deeply buried in thought and seemed to be carrying the world over. Naturally Smith wanted to know why.

"It is this way," explained Jones. "I can scarcely decide whether to wed I do not care, or a poor young girl whom I love dearly. For the life of me I can't decide what to do."

"It strikes me," handsomely advised Smith, "that in a case of that kind you ought to decide in favor of your heart. Obviously it is your duty to marry the poor young girl."

"You are right I am," you are right!" happily exclaimed Jones with a relieved expression. "I shall marry the poor young girl."

"Then," commented Smith. "Now then, if you have no objections, I would like you to give me the address of the wealthy widow."

Dissolution of Partnership.

A West Virginia darky, a blacksmith, recently announced a change in his business as follows:

"Notice—De copardnership heretofore existing between me and Mose Skinner is hereby resolved. Dem what owe de firm will settle wid me, and dem what de firm owes will settle wid Mose."

At Post o' Peril

Or, The Black Beaver Treasure

By Victor Ardmore

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Begun in No. 22, May 29. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

BASIL stared at the voyageur, unable to find power of speech. Michel remained the look; but in a very different way. Once he had been a cheerful man with a great strength of character back of his gay moods, a strength that made him as bold, brave a voyageur as ever had run rapids along the streams of the fur-land, but this was a new Michel. The smile remained, but it was more like childish. Vacant and foolish, it was testimony to the misfortunes that had somehow met the fearless adventurer of the Northland.

"Michel," said Basil, gently, after a pause, "how long have you been at this post?"

"How long?" asked the man, blankly, and then as if the effort at recollection was painful, he carried a hand slowly to his forehead, pressing there oddly.

The action had Basil's utmost more. On the forehead, and extending upward into the hair of the head, was a long, ugly-looking scar. The sight of it began to build on the mute testimony of that mark.

"How long?" Michel repeated. "Dear me, Ind, I don't know. I was here long, long ago, before any man came, alone with the beavers."

"Who is chief trader now?"

"Why, Derosier, of course."

"And who before him?"

"Before—him? I—I don't know. Voila! 'tis so long my memory does not grasp the name. I remember nobody, and think Derosier was the first partisan here."

"Did you," asked Basil, eagerly, "never know Bruce Campbell?"

"No, never," was the ready reply. "No such man has ever been here. If there had been I should remember. He—what did you call his name?"

"Bruce, but matter," Basil replied, sighing.

"I never forget a name," continued the voyageur, fondly. "Names are things I call quick to my dog, but always I remember his name. Yes, yes, always. It is a great gift to remember names. This dog, his name is Touch-Me-Not. See him, the great beauty! Eh, mon enfant, eh?"

Basil looked at the great brute and marveled at the contrast between dog and master. Touch-Me-Not was gray of fur, with sharp muzzle, pricked ears, long legs, and a massive body. Immense strength showed in the shoulders, the body, and it was easy to guess what a snap of the jaws would be like. The eyes were bright with a threade of red, and this, with their fierce expression, contributed to give the original look to the animal's countenance.

"Perhaps you don't know all about dogs, little master," Michel pursued. "I mean those in the north country. Some are all dog, but most of them are largely wolf, and some are pretty near wholly wolf. Look you, I know these things you can see that Touch-Me-Not is almost all wolf. Maybe so he one-eighth dog, but more, voila! he is surely the wonderful beast—nein?"

Basil nodded slowly. Reared among scenes that had been only the present post, over again, wolf dogs were nothing new. The lad knew Touch-Me-Not's type. Savage, almost always treacherous, ready to bite and fight with to the end, they were as dangerous as, in their strength, they were valuable. Now the brute was turning up its red eyes, certainly looking at Basil and perhaps appraising the lad.

"He is like you, Michel," was the reply.

"Eh? What do you mean, little master?"

"You are tall and gentle, and he——"

"Tis, voyageur," slapped his leg soundly and broke into a cackle of laughter.

"——did you say he? Life o' the beaver! but he is a rare hand in fight. Let—let—let's call him the dog of the fire like a trap. Tread on his tail—voh-ee! Oh, he will pick a mouthful of flesh from you quick, quick, quick! Ah! he is no dog that unless you have money to leave by the corpse of your soul. Touch-Me-Not can tell!"

"How can you keep such company?"

"How?" repeated Michel, surprised, "why, why, why, I am a man of very pretty a more radical type. But, mon master, he loves me and is always good to me. I saved his life once, and he loves those I tell him to love—does the dog. He shall love you. Chien, the child would speak with you. Up, and nuzzle his hand. Up, chien!"

Touch-Me-Not looked at Basil unblinking red eyes, and then reared and placed his ponderous feet on the window-sill, close by Basil's side. The fierce face did not soften and the stumpy tail did not wag, but there was condescension in the act, the position, and the wolf eyes.

Now, Basil did not waver. Always accustomed to the Kind, it was a place from an old volume to see the beast. Matter-of-fact, yet very kindly, the lad caressed the head and patted the nose with odd little pats.

"Good dog!" Basil said sweetly. "Great, big, fine old fellow! You are strong as the buffalo, brave as the grizzly bear, stern as the wolf you call your own. Good, good, good!"

Still the tail was wagless, but the red eyes appraised him who petted with even more scrutiny than before. Then, grim as ever, the nose was reached out to the slight hand and the animal sniffed with dignity.

"Is it not fine?" cried Michel. "Behold, he loves you well already. Touch-Me-Not makes no mistakes, and he is loyalty — eh? Why, he would kill ten men to help you, and then die killing the tenth—eh? Hein? Do I not know? Down, chien!"

Touch-Me-Not dropped back to the ground.

"We must go now," Michel continued, "for we have work to do. Know, master, that I am a foolish and careless little Sophie Crellis, and I give to her a bird I have taped. It will always come at her call. She promised never to shut it up. 'Tis a wicked thing to make captive any bird or beast that naturally lives free with the wolf-dog. But we will see you again. Joy be with you!"

Smiling airily, he waved his hand and walked away with the wolf-dog at his side. Basil looked after him, wondered, sighed, and then tears trickled down his smooth face.

It was not so much that Michel Ayot, once the boldest of bold voyageurs, was now a stricken fool and purposeless, but this man—this hardy, dauntless heart of the wild places—had, perhaps, held a secret that meant two thousand pounds in money to Basil, and that to the Hudson Bay Fur Company.

Surely, surely—so her thoughts ran—Michel must know. Knowing the Black Beaver was buried, but Michel had gone silly. Poor Michel! Poor daughter of Trader Campbell!

A step sounded behind the lad, and thinking Donald had returned, he turned quickly. It was Merivel, however, and Basil knew at first sight. A lad of about eighteen years, slender and none too strong of appearance, with a pitiful face and refined manners. Basil knew, and found himself on the brink of another danger. Of course Merivel remembered as clearly as he did—what then, since all at Post o' Peril must be devoted to the Northern Star, the other remembered—why, the puzzled expression of the first moments was giving place to a look of fear and repulsion.

"Merivel!" cried the newcomer.

The voice, low, gentle, and melodious, broke the spell. Merivel, seeing Basil in the masculine clothing, and he swooped down upon the welcomer and clasped both hands in his.

"Sandy" was the answering cry, "dear old Sandy!"

Had they been brothers the meeting could not have been more cordial, more animated. Still holding hands they spoke almost simultaneously, for both but Sandy was too full of wonder to remain long impractical.

"Why are you living you here, Merivel?" he asked. "Here—where your enemies are, here, in strange garments, here—why do tell me? They have captured you!" and distress was in the words.

Basil had already made his decision. He could not delude this lad he had known for years at Post o' Peril, and half-confidences are not advisable. Already he had decided that Sandy should know enough to content him, for that treachery would come from such a quarter was not to be believed.

The story was swiftly told, and told in full fairness as regarded the gains made of maps, plans, or papers belonging to the Hudson Bay Company. It was enough that five thousand pounds of Merivel's money could be placed as the ruling motive.

"And now, dear Sandy, do you know anything of the Black Beaver?" was the final question.

"Poor Merivel! Not a thing. I never heard of the strange cache."

"There have been changes here, Sandy. The old palisades are gone——"

"Yes, pulled down because they were decaying. That was a year ago."

"The blacksmith and carpenter shops are not as they were."

"Both burned to the ground in a fire a few months after the palisades were changed. The new buildings are a little shifted as to position."

"What about Michel Ayot?"

"Poor Michel!" sighed Sandy, "I always liked him well, for he was always kind and genial. Merivel, you may remember that when you left here I was sickly. Well, when the post fell I was in a slow fever, too weak to walk. Nothing ill was done to me, and when the old garrison was ordered away I stayed because I was too sick to go. Francois St. Ettell, who commanded the stormtug-party, took a fancy to me and had me well cared for, and when he went away—he is a high officer with the Northwest Fur Co.—he ordered Derosier, who came as trader, to use me kindly. You know I am half French. I stayed here to hold fort, and as I wrote a very good hand, the partisan made me his confidential clerk, as he called it—a odd term at this post."

"Did he thereby win you over to the Northwesters?" Basil asked.

Sandy threw his slight shoulders back proudly.

"Not he! I am a Hudson Bay man. My heart is with them, and my body will soon be there, too, before long, but I have stayed——"

He beat nearer to Basil.

"I can trust you, Merivel?"

"Ay, even with your life."

"Then I will tell you some news goes secretly to the H. B. that would not go if I were not here."

Delight flashed to Basil's face. If Sandy's confidence were well placed they were now gone. He, too, had a secret—to conceal, and as he had given his confidence Sandy would have to have made concealment, it was plain that his attachment to Bruce Campbell's daughter was now useless.

"We will help each other!" Basil cried, face radiant.

"So we will, and if we can find your treasure—but there will be a safer time than this to talk of it. But you asked me about Michel. Did you see the great scar on his head? I know not how he got it, but when I recovered from the fever I have told you about he was here, very ill, the wound of it not healed. When he recovered he was as you see him now, his ability gone, a poor, mentally weak creature whose one trait is gentle goodness. Poor Michel!"

"Is anybody else here that I know?"

"Not one person."

"When Michel disappeared another loyal Bay Company voyageur also vanished—Angus Grieve. Do you know of him?"

"No. I remember him before the post was captured, but have never seen or heard of him since."

Sandy started and listened keenly.

"Some one has entered," he whispered, "and I can swear 'tis that of Trader Derosier. We must not be seen together, for he might set me thinking. I will hide in one of these rooms."

There had been time for the boy to leap from a window he dared to, to a small room. Then the trader entered by the front door.

Basil, alone, awaiting over-fast. What if Derosier took the fancy to enter the small room? Discovery floated in the air, and made was even nearer. What if Derosier looked?

CHAPTER V.

THE trader stopped and looked around the room. Basil, eying him closely, failed to see any sign of suspicion, but the danger was there, nevertheless.

"Where," Derosier asked, "is your companion?"

"Voyageurs went out some time ago," Basil replied steadily.

"Where?"

"I had the impression that he would speak with you, though I do not know that he had anything special to say."

"It does not matter. Any time will do. How are you feeling now?"

"Helped by my rest, but still very tired."

"You need more time, of course. You must not be in a hurry to leave this post. Also, you must journey you need a lot of rest. Stay here for a week or more, and then I will help you on your journey, made of a fortnight I shall be sending a brigade south, and you can go with it and be free from all exertion, yourself."

He turned toward the outer door as he spoke, and after Basil had made a suitable reply, went away. The lad watched, and when certain that he was really gone, tapped at the door where Sandy was hiding. The latter came out looking about him warily, but free from actual fear.

"All went smoothly," he said, smiling. "I was terribly frightened," Basil confessed.

"There was a little commotion under my ribs, but if I had heard disquieting words or sounds here I would have taken my chances by leaping from the window. Well, that's past. Now, comrade, I will linger no longer at present, but remember that you have a friend here—I wish that he was stronger of resources than he is, but he will do his best. Now, good-by for a while, but be sure I will have my eyes and ears open."

"Thank you, Sandy! I know your good will well."

"You can trust me!" the clerk declared with a nod.

"I am very fortunate in having you."

"We will take up the matter of that buried treasure. If we can get an idea about where it was buried, I will furnish spades and we can make a hurry dig for it some night when the weather is likely to favor us. Good-by!"

Basil gave him his hand, thanking him again.

"You are going to have your money," Sandy promised, and left the building.

Basil looked after him, half wishing his confidence had been more full. It was not, for many that Basil thought most about. Ten thousand dollars was certainly something important to its lawful owners, and the welfare of the Hudson Bay Company was not low. The maps, plans, and writings must be recovered.

When Donald returned he reported few discoveries. He had seen Derosier and talked with him on small matters. He had seen Angus Grieve, Alexis, and Philabert, but no one had forgotten the compact that they seem to be strangers. And no word had been exchanged.

"Later I will talk secretly with one of them, though," he added. "Which is the best one to talk to, do you think?—the most trustworthy?"

"Philabert I do not know, but Alexis and Terry are faithful men," Basil answered.

"It shall be one of them, though the reputation of Philabert is not a very great. He has done very well in the country farther east."

It was a decision of important point then, but they would have given it different attention had they known that the Black Beaver Treasure was now not the faithful man known in the East, but a treacherous namesake who was then daily studying their every motion, intentions and then designing to betray them to their enemies.

"I suppose," said Basil, uneasily, "that it was seen then and the cache opened?" and his face was very gloomy.

"You forget that if the Northwest Company had the maps they would have made use of them long ago."

"I did forget for the moment. Oh! It is all right, then, and the cache has not been opened, and it is for us to find it. Oh! if we only can!"

Donald began to encourage his companion, and could find no fault with him for talking with Michel Ayet. This fact being true, Basil really felt poor Michel was certainly harmless—or so he seemed. As for Sandy, if he was as faithful as he believed, he would be a useful later. It was good to have a friend so close to Derosier.

"I have begun

which he was carrying further forward.

"I wanted to show you this camarade," he explained. "Is it not a grand weapon? When the rifle speaks, death snaps up the bullet—hein?"

"A fine-looking rifle, surely," Donald agreed. "Few voyageurs have its equal. Made for sure use, its trappings are beyond the run of such things in our posts."

"Never cost me a shilling," declared Fabian.

"Oh! a present, was it?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the voyageur, greatly amused, and he choked with the fervor of his mirth. "Ay, mon enfant, truly so, yet he who gave of it never knew that he did it. Which is a mystery, is it not? Tres bien, all things should not be told. Bless me, no! A good rifle, and for two years it has been mine. Behold!"

He held it before Donald's face and patted its barrel lovingly.

"Did ever you see a better?" he continued. "Natal to bear, wolf, or fox. To them, did I say? Ah! the dear gun! It has had its meal of human flesh, too. Two years ago—but why explain? Begar, the still tongue invites no trouble."

His cocked the weapon in his hands and then drew it nearer to him.

"Camarade," he added, "we talked together outside, and I wanted you to see how brave a gun I carry. Some day we will hunt together. Then—then, frere, you shall see what Fabian can do. Ay, life o' me!"

He took a step toward the door.

"If I like you as well later as I do now, you shall some day bear more. The rifle can boast its man. Fabian knows. For now I go. Even in this quiet season there is work to do. Farewell!"

He left the building, and Donald turned to Basil with a smile. What he saw caused the smile to fade at once. Basil did not smile, but there was an expression on his face that alarmed his friend.

"What is wrong?" he asked anxiously.

"That rifle!" Basil gasped.

"What about it?"

"Oh! the horror of it! It was my father's favorite rifle. How did it come into that wretch's hands? How? how?"

CHAPTER VI.

DONALD knit his brows as he grappled with the problem. Not yet did he understand what was in Basil's mind.

"When," he asked, "did your father last have the rifle?"

"I saw it in his possession the day I left the fort," Basil replied. "Nobody but himself ever handled it, for it was choice to him, and he feared harm might come to it. He left here when the post was captured by the Northwesters, and I have been told that he had no weapons when he was found. Do you not see? This wretched brute, this Fabian, boasted that the rifle had killed a man. Was it my poor father?"

"But," urged the older man, "I have heard it said that Bruce Campbell had no wound when he was found in the woods."

"How did the Frenchman get the rifle? Not by any honest means. Oh! I can only think of that man with horror. There is something about him and his half-told secret that chills me. What has he done?"

"Wait a bit!" Donald continued. "While I have no special information, it seems that when this fort fell and its gallant garrison was driven into the woods they would be deprived of their weapons. This particular rifle was so fine a thing that it would be coveted——"

"Then the Northwest leaders would retain it, not give it to a mere voyageur like Fabian."

"Perhaps, but I do not think your father met with foul play at the hands of his rifle. No, no! I feel sure of that."

"In any case, Fabian knows how my father died. Yes, and he was the man who made way with him."

And in this belief Basil was not to be shaken. Donald argued, but without changing the situation. He did, however, as he believed, recall more about the departure of Campbell's force from the post. Stimulated memory said that a limited number of wounded men been allowed the ouadrilene garrison, in order that they might live, and that later they broke up into detachments in order to come one more game, at least one rifleman to each party.

"While I am not quite certain that your father's party was made up of himself, Michel Ayot and Angus Gregg, it seems probable. Perhaps Fabian came upon your father after life passed away, and so secured the rifle as the spoils of. That, of course, premises that Mr. Campbell was allowed to retain it."

Basil shook his head. This made no answer. He had suddenly grown averse to argument or other talk along that line, and he moved restlessly, at last, and ended it.

"I wish," he said, "that I could go and come freely here, and I shall certainly do something at once. The fort seems unusually quiet. I am going to walk past where the Black Beaver was buried and see if I can guess anywhere near its location."

Donald saw no objection to this, and his young companion went. Basil now tried to act prudently, and really his success was greater than he could expect. Assuming a careless air he sauntered from the building and thence to the vicinity where, two years before, he had seen his father bury the treasure.

As he had before discovered, there was no landmark that remained. Yet, somewhere there the excavation had been made, and he believed he could tell within ten feet where it was. Still, how did it help him? In a garrison where vigilance was constantly necessary to make sure the Hudson Bay Company's men did not attempt an assault, how were intruders to dig a pit ten feet wide and three feet deep? Their movements would be seen, and the grating of the spades in the soil be heard by the alert sentinels. How was the Black Beaver to be found?

Basil made the journey through the grounds and was returning when he

"Then, you shall see what Fabian can do!"

was hailed from a point only a few yards away.

"Young man!"

Basil started and looked. Realizing that he was beside the chief trader's house he was momentarily worried, but when he saw nothing more dangerous than a woman gitting by the open window he grew ashamed. He stayed his feet, eying her attentively. She was not like the others of her sex he had seen at Fond o' Peril, nor even like the trader, for whereas Derosier had black hair, hers was brown.

Basil's hand went to his cap in a salute, and the lady smiled faintly and nodded.

"Can you tell me," she pursued, "where my Lord Derosier is?"

"No," Basil answered. "I do not know."

"I wanted to speak with him. I wish to ask permission to make a visit to the North Pole."

"Eh!" questioned the lad.

"I am tired of it here," the lady resumed, "dreadfully tired. The gayety at the Pole would be such an agreeable change from the monotony. Do you not think so?"

Basil looked hard and thought actively. There was much to interest him in the face she was about to awaken, the belief that she was a woman to be envied. She was pale, and dark circles ringed her eyes, while there was a droop to her face and figure alike that impressed him. These things and her odd words created a puzzle.

"It would certainly be a change," he replied to her last words.

"Young man, you look kind and sympathetic," the lady resumed. "Have you feeling for the unforunate?"

"Yes," said Basil, perplexed.

"At your age there is no such thing as misfortune, though young persons sometimes think they are in grief. Let them wait until they are older, and then see. I was never unhappy when I was Angus Gregg's wife."

The listener started. The familiar name fell upon his ears strangely and it brought companion ideas that startled him.

"It has been different since I married Derosier," the lady added, with a heavy sigh.

The lad glanced around him nervously. He longed to talk with the pale lady, but had the impression that he took chances in doing it. It was plain that she was not possessed of firm of mind, and probably Derosier would resent having an outsider speak with her. Keen interest spurred him on, however. He had known long-lost Angus Gregg, but the voyageur had not been officially connected with Bruce Campbell's fort, and he knew nothing of a wife. Basil made a sudden, perhaps rash resolution.

"Where," he asked, "is Angus Gregg?"

"Where?" asked the lady, sighing again. "Who knows? I have not seen him nor heard from him in a long time."

"When did you see him last?"

"I don't know. It was long ago. I often wonder why I have not been with him. I never obtained a divorce, and I don't think he did. Somehow, I was no longer his wife, but was wife of Lord Derosier. Do you know my Lord Derosier?"

"I have seen him."

"I wish I never had. Angus was mild, kind and good to all persons, but Derosier is full of passionate anger and deceit. I have often told him I wanted to leave him, but he will not have it so. Still, I am unhappy, and that is why I want to go sojourning to the North Pole. I have dreamed that delightful people live there."

Basil now carried a heavy heart. It was plain that the pale lady was not herself mentally, and he fell to wondering. Michel Ayot, too, was mentally afflicted. What twist of wicked fate had cast two victims of the ugly past at Derosier's door, and to what extent was he responsible for their trouble?

"Why did you marry Derosier?" the lad resumed stubbornly.

"I don't know. I have seen a writing that shows I did marry him, but I remember nothing about it. The last I knew I was with Angus—good Angus, my husband!"

"But you must know what became of Angus."

"No, I do not."

"Where was his home? Where did you live with him?"

"I have forgotten. We did have a home, and we were—oh! so happy. Nobody could be otherwise with Angus. Then came a blank and I was here. Why? It puzzles me, and my poor head buzzes so when I try to remember. Derosier—oh! that man speaks fairly, he worries me, worries me——"

A step sounded close at hand, and Basil, who had grown absent-minded, looked around and saw Sandy walking rapidly. He arrived, looking pale and alarmed, and grasped Basil's arm.

"Get away from here quickly!" he whispered tremulously. "Derosier is coming. He must not see you with Madame!"

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting further facts with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bring health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

A Little Jaunt.

"Alfred Horatio," began Mrs. Simmp, tugging at his lapels, "what do you want to do this afternoon?"

It was a beautiful Sunday and Mr. Simmp glanced out over the green lawn reflectively.

"Why, sleep, m'dear," replied Mr. Simmp. His shrill voice was incongruous in a man as huge as he and sometimes it irritated Mrs. Simmp.

"Sleep! eat! eat! sleep! What is life to you?"

"Troublesome, m'dear," regretted Mr. Simmp. He and she had been married twenty-five years ago, but she was still "m'dear" to him.

"How would it do to take a long trip down the island in the car?" suggested Mrs. Simmp, dimpling coyly.

"Yes, m'dear," said Mr. Simmp.

So they ordered the car and tumbled into it. Mr. Simmp joined her in the tonneau.

"Just us two, Alfred," protested Mrs. Simmp. The chauffeur was dismissed. Mr. Simmp clambered into the driver's seat, pressed the starting button and whirled away. He lighted a pipe.

"Put that out, Alfred," she commanded. He didn't hear her.

Soon they were racing along the beach outside the city limits.

"I say, Alfred, put out that pipe," she repeated. "It gets into my eyes."

Mr. Simmp heard her and brought the car to a standstill.

"Come, sit in the front seat," he requested.

"No," she demurred. "Some one might see me."

"What of it?" he shrieked.

"Only servant girls ride in the front seat," she explained. "I have a position to maintain, remember."

"They might think I was the chauffeur," reflected Mr. Simmp, bitterly. "Then, let me smoke, m'dear, or you won't permit it in the house and this is one of my rare chances to enjoy a pipe."

"I'll suffocate," she protested.

He put it out. "Let's turn back, m'dear."

"Oh, no, Alfred; let's get out in the open, far from the madding crowd, where the sunlight shines happily on the breast of the dancing gulf and the sophisticated——"

Mr. Simmp grunted. He started the car. He did his part, but the car didn't start.

"We have a panne, m'dear," observed Mr. Simmp.

"In the kitchen," replied Mrs. Simmp, absently, and then she grew angry. "What are you talking about?"

"The car won't go," explained Mr. Simmp.

"Why?" she asked.

He explained to her at great length. She knew he would mean things up. What was he going to do about it?

He climbed out, crawled under, bent over, gave a glance, unraveled strange sounds and discovered the trouble.

"We have no gasoline," he lamented.

"What!" she asked Mrs. Simmp.

Mr. Simmp walked away and whispered it to his coat sleeve.

"Then we'll have to walk."

"I won't," she declared flatly. "You're a brute and I knew it when I married you. I was enough (like a fool) that I could tame you."

But she got out and together they plunged through the sand toward Galveston and home, miles away. Mrs. Simmp has No. 4 pedal extremities and wore high heels. Mr. Simmp has big feet and wears big shoes and make no bones about it. After twenty minutes Mrs. Simmp forgot her anger and began to limp painfully.

When they got home Mrs. Simmp executed a pas seul. "Oh, I'm so glad you enjoyed your outing. Aren't you glad you didn't stay at home and sleep, poor dear."

With palpitating gust in one foot and excruciating corns on the other, "poor dear" eyed her fiskily.

Later if you will call the doctor on the phone. This fool exchange girl says she can't understand me."

What Landed Him There.

"My good man, what are you in prison for?"

"My convictions."

"Your convictions!"

"Yes, mum. If the jury had acquitted me I wouldn't be here."

Gold and the Girl

Or, A Cattle Man's Grit

By Wilder Anthony

(Copyright 1915 by W. D. Boyce Co.)

Begun in No. 17, April 24. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from newsstands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST CLEW.

LET'S see!" Trowbridge reined in his pony and meditated, while he and Dorothy had covered several minutes of their way back to Moondance. "Jensen was shot about here somewhere, wasn't he?"

"I think it was over there." She pointed with her quirt in the direction of a distant clump of jack-pines. "Shall we ride over and take a look at the spot?" He smiled at her instinctive shudder of repugnance. "We haven't any Sherlock Holmes in this country, and maybe we need one. I'll have a hand at it. Come on!"

In response to the pressure of his knee, the trained cow-pony whirled toward the jack-pines, and Dorothy followed, laughing back at the idea that as ingenuous a man as Lem Trowbridge might possess the analytical gift of the born detective.

"You!" she said mockingly, when she had caught up. "You're as easily transparent as glass; not that it isn't nice to be that way, but still you are. Besides, the rain last night must have washed everything away."

"No doubt, but we'll have a look anyhow. The world of crime, I've heard, though, the way of criminals has always interested me. I'd rather read a good detective story than any other sort of literature."

"I shouldn't think you had any gift that way."

"That's got nothing to do with it," he said laughingly. "It's always like that. Haven't you noticed how every man thinks he's missed his calling; that if he'd only gone in for something else, he'd have been a startling genius at it? Just to show you! I've got a hand over at my place, a fellow named Yank Jones, who can't do a steer in pretty close to the record. He's a born cowman, if there ever was one, but do you suppose he thinks that's his job?"

"Doesn't he?" she asked politely. One of the secrets of her popularity lay in her willingness to go along with and deft little interjections of interest.

"He does not. Poetry! Shakespeare! That's his 'forte'! At night he gets out a little book and reads Hamlet to the rest of the boys. Thinks that if he'd ever hit Broadway with a show, he'd have set the town on fire."

When Dorothy laughed heartily, as she now did, the sound of it was worth going miles to hear. There are all shades of temperament and character in laughter, which is the one mood of which we are least self-conscious; hers revealed not only a sense of humor, rare in her sex, but a blithe, happy nature, which made allies at once of those upon whose ears her merriment fell. Trowbridge's eyes shone with appreciation of it and of its compliment to his ability as a raconteur.

"Well, I hope he would have," she said finally.

"Maybe I'll make good along with Sherlock Holmes. "He winked at her as he slipped from his horse's back, on the edge of a rocky table, fronting the jackpines. "Here's the place, I reckon. His quick glance had caught a dark stain upon the rock, which the rain had failed to cleanse entirely of Jensen's blood.

When Dorothy saw it, too, her mirth subsided in her mind, but not especially. Death was the most horrible that life held, and especially in the case of a murdered man, who, like Jensen, lacked the herder. Not only was the thing horrible in itself, but horrible also in its associations. The danger of which threatened Wade for so long as the sheep men remained in the valley.

"Do you suppose he's superstitious. "There isn't anything here."

"Just a minute." Struck by the note of distress in her voice, unlike it little of the moment before, he added, "Ride on a ways, if you want."

"No!" She shuddered. "I'll wait, but don't be long."

It was well for the cattle man that she did wait, for at length she left him, for, when he had inspected the immediate vicinity of the blood-stain, he stepped back to the edge of the rock-table toward an abutment, in which lay coiled a rattlesnake. Deeply concerned with the operations, he did not hear the warning of the rattle, and Dorothy might not have heard it either had not her horse reared in its path with a start and whinny. Glancing over her shoulder, she saw the peril confronting him and cried out to him.

"Look out, behind you!"

There are men, calling themselves conjurers, who perform prodigies of agility with coins, playing-cards, and other articles of legerdemain, but they are not to be compared to Trowbridge in springing backward from the menacing snake. In half the space of an eyelash movement, he had leaped and his stick seemed to leap from the scabbard into his waiting palm. The next second, the rattle had ceased to sound, the head of the snake had been blown from its body.

"Close call! Thanks!"

So close, indeed, had the call been that, coming upon the dreadful associations of the place, it was unpleasant. Her skin was a greenish white and her lips were trembling, but not more so than were the nerves of Trowbridge, which seemed in an agony of fear. When she saw Trowbridge pick up a withered branch and, bringing it to the recesses of the hole before which the snake had been coiled, she rebelled.

"I'm not going to stay here," she said hotly.

"Just a minute! There's probably a nest of young ones. Oh, all right, go on, then," he called to her, as she turned her pony with the quirt. "I'll catch you. Ride slowly."

He looked after her, with a glance of amusement, before renewing his prodding with the branch. Suddenly, after catching his own horse to prevent it from following hers. To his surprise, there seemed to be young snakes in the rock, but his scraping out of the recess developed an amazing fact. When he was about to give up and vault into the saddle, his ears caught the flash of brass as a small object rolled down the face of the rock. It was the shell of a cartridge.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, as he examined the shell. "It's the first clew."

Springing upon the back of his horse, he galloped madly after Dorothy, shouting to her as he came. In her pique, she would not answer his hail, nor halt in her saddle, but he was too exultant to care. He was not concerned only with overtaking her that he might tell her what he had found.

"For the love of Mike!" he said, when by a liberal use of his quirt, he caught up with her. "What are you riding, a race?"

"You can keep up, can't you?" she banteringly demanded.

"Sure, I can keep up, all right." He reached out and caught her bridle rein, drawing her pony down to a walk over her protest. "I want to show you something. You can't see it riding like a circus. Look here!" He handed her the shell. "You know, if I had come when you wanted me to, I wouldn't have found it. That's what's called the detective instinct, I reckon," he added, with a grin. "I guess I'm some Sherlock Holmes after all."

"Whose is it?" She turned the shell over in her hand, hating to touch it.

"Look!" He took it from her and showed her where it was dented by the impact of the firing-pin. "I reckon you wouldn't know, not being up in firearms. The hammer of the gun that shell don't hit true; not so far off as to miss fire, you understand, but it ain't in line exactly. That tells me a lot."

"What does it tell you?" She looked at him quickly.

"Nothing." He spoke slowly. "There ain't but one gun in Moondance that has that peculiarity, that I know of, and that one belongs to Jap Bailey."

She laid her hand impulsively upon his arm so that both of the ponies were checked to a stop.

"Then he shot Jensen?"

Her voice was tremulous with eagerness, although she had never doubted Wade, had never thought for a moment that he could have committed the crime, as he planned it, she wanted him cleared of the charge in the eyes of the world. She had wanted this, hitherto, by right of their friendship, but she wanted it doubly now that she had the privilege of his kiss. She was a very happy girl to have Wade at on her lips, and with the doubt destroyed she thought her happiness would be complete.

Her disappointment was acute when she saw that Trowbridge did not deem that the discovery of the cartridge was convincing evidence. She heard him say:

"Don't go so fast now, Dorothy. This shell proves that Bailey's gun was fired, but it doesn't necessarily prove that he was at the trigger, or that the gun was aimed at Jensen. Bailey might have picked it up accidentally. I'm ready to say that he just fired at some snake, like I did."

"Oh, he might say anything, of course." She was greatly depressed. "But it's evidence, isn't it? It casts the doubt on him, doesn't it?"

"It does that, all right. It casts it further than him." The cattle man's voice possessed a deadly ring. "It's a clew, that's what it is, and we've got a clew and we've got a motive, and we didn't have them both them yesterday."

"How do you suppose the shell got where you found it?"

"Bailey threw it there, after the shooting, thinking it would be safe in that hole. You see—" He could not resist making the triumphant point once more. He stopped to look for the young ones, likely it never would have been found. Just that chance—that chance like that—throws the biggest criminals. Funny, ain't it?" But she was too preoccupied with the implications of discovery to quibble with him over his gifts as a sleuth.

"What can we do about it?" She gave her pony rein. "What ought we to do?"

"I'll find this fellow, Bailey, and wring the truth out of him." Her eyes flashed at the determination she read in his face. "Don't look so pretty mistaken, though, he was only the fool."

"You mean that Moran——"

"And Rexhill," Trowbridge snapped. "They are people to hire Jap Bailey to paid Bailey to shoot Jensen so that the crime might be put onto Gordon. I believe that they've proved it this minute, but the thing is to prove it."

"Then we've no time to lose," she said, touching her pony with the quirt. "We mustn't loiter here. Suppose they should send Bailey away?"

The thought led them to drive the now tired ponies at breakneck speed. Many times during that wild ride, Trowbridge glanced admiringly at his fellow horsewoman, who gritted her teeth against the sway of weariness and responded to his every signal. A single man himself, he, too, had come to feel tenderly toward her, but he had no idea of how far he had gone, or more than good friends with him, while he knew that he had not the vanity to struggle against the current of her affections. She was for Wade, but this knowledge did not make Trowbridge less keen in his admiration of her grit.

"Good luck, Lem!" She gave him her hand as they galloped down the main street of Moondance. "Let me know as soon as you can. I'll be anxious."

He nodded.

"I know where to find him, if he's in town. Oh, we're getting it on them, girl! We'll be ready to 'call' them soon. Good-by."

But Tug Bailey was not in town, as the cattle man learned in Monte Joe's dance-hall, piled high with tables and chairs and reeking with the odor, left over from the night before, of whisky fumes and stale tobacco smoke. Monte Joe professed not to know where the puncher was, but as Trowbridge pressed him for information, the voice of a woman, as shrill as the voice of a parrot, floated down from the floor above.

"Wait a minute."

Trowbridge waited and the woman came down to him. He knew her by ill-repute, as did every man in the town, for she was Fanny Maddox, one of the dance-hall habitues, good-looking enough by night to the inflamed fancy, but horrible by day, with her smoke-dried skin and soul-dried eyes.

"You want to know where Tug is?"

"Yes, where is he?"

"He's headed for Sand Bluffs, I reckon. If he isn't headed there, he means to strike that railway at some point or other; him and that cat, Nellie Lewis, that he's gone out with." Her lusterless eyes were fired by the only thing that now could fire them, the light of jealousy.

"You're sure?" said Trowbridge, more to bridge the period of his own disappointment than because he doubted the woman's attitude made sufficiently obvious.

"Sure? Of course, I'm sure. Say—" she clutched at his sleeve as he turned to go—"you're not after Tug for anything, bring him back here, will you? Promise me that! Let me—" her pale lips curved into a weird grin smile—"get my hands on him!"

From the dance-hall, Trowbridge hastened to the Jail House, to find a warrant for Bailey's arrest and to demand that Sheriff Thomas should telegraph to the sheriffs of the towns above and below, Crystal River and Paradise, to head off the fugitive there. Not finding the sheriff at home, and under the dominance of the Rexhill faction, the cattle man was not sure that the warrant would issue without opposition from the official. He meant, if he saw signs of indecision in that quarter, to do without formalities, and proceed to put at the foot of the message the name of every rancher about the countryside. He meant to send a message awaken the law along the railroad, without help from Thomas, and the warrant could be issued after the arrest be considered justifiable by his associates.

He had no trouble on this score, however, for Sheriff Thomas was out on the trail of a horse-thief, and the deputy was not the man would thus act.

"Will I help you, Lem? Say, will a cat drink milk? You bet I'll help you. But wouldn't it be better for me to be ashamed of what's been doing in this here office that I'm aching for the chance. I'll send them wires off immediate."

"I reckon you'll be the next sheriff in Moondance, Steve," Trowbridge said gratefully. "There's going to be a change here soon."

"That so? Well, I ain't sayin' that I'd refuse, but I ain't doing this as no favor, either. You understand that. I'm doin' it because it's the law, the good old-fashioned, honest-to-Gawd, if you'll pardie, law!"

"That's the kind we want here—that, or no kind. So long."

With a nod of relief, Trowbridge swung out of the jail, well satisfied that he had done for Gordon's friend Gordon, and pleased with himself for having lived so ably up to the standards set by the sentiment of the popular faction. Since Bailey had not had time to reach the railroad, his arrest was now a practical certainty, and that he was back in Moondance, a bucket of hot tar and a bundle of feathers, with a promise of immediate application, would probably be sufficient to extract a confession from him that would implicate Rexhill and Moran.

Feeling that he had earned the refreshment of a drink, he was about to enter the hotel, when, to his utter amazement, he saw Sentry running madly down the street toward him. Sentry, on a horse that had evidently been lashed to the last ounce of endurance, he ran forward at once, for the appearance of the old man in Moondance, with a countenance of unusual agony over his head, could only mean that some tragedy had happened at the ranch.

"Sentry!" he yelled to him. "You're the man I've been lookin' for."

"What is it?" Trowbridge demanded. "The boy?" The old cattle man slid from the horse, which could scarcely keep its feet, but Santry was scarcely more upon his own feet than in nerve. His face was twitching in a way that would have been ludicrous but for its significance of terrible emotion. "I reckon. I come straight away after you, knowin' that you'd have a better head for this kind of thing than I'd be."

"God!" The exclamation broke from Trowbridge like the roar of a wounded lion. "How did it happen?"

Santry explained the circumstances, in so far as he knew them, in a few, breathless sentences. The old man was clearly beside himself with grief and rage, and past capacity to act intelligently upon his own initiative. He had

not been satisfied, he said, to remain behind at the ranch-house and let Wade go to the timber tract alone, and so after a period of indecision had followed him. On the edge of the cottonwoods, he had come upon Wade's rideriess horse, the bridle rein broken and blood-stained. He had followed the trail to the point of the assault, but there was no sign of Gordon, which fact indicated that he had been carried away, doubtless in a condition of helplessness, and he could most likely come upon him by surprise.

"I could see that there was a number of them, by the tracks—as many as five or six, I reckon. I followed the trail as far as I could. Where it crossed the creek it was lost on the rocks. I lost it. Then I come back to the house and sent the boys out, and come on here after you."

"Where do suppose they would have taken him?" Trowbridge asked, pitying even in his own grief the state that Santry was in.

"Gawd knows! There's more pockets and things in them hills than there is jack-rabbits. Tain't likely they'll find him—leastways, not in time; not before that hell-cat of a Moran—I was him did it, d—n him! I know it was. Lem, for Gawd's sake, what are we goin' to do?"

"The first thing to do is to get you out of this town, before Thomas jumps you."

"I don't keer about myself. I'll shoot the —"

"Luckily, he's away on business. Come with me!" Trowbridge shoved Santry ahead into the office of the hotel. "Frank," he said to the red-headed proprietor, "is Moran in town today?"

"Nope." The Irishman looked with interest at Santry. "He rode out this morning, with four or five of his outfit."

"Rexhill's here, ain't he?" Trowbridge asked. "Tell him there's two gentlemen down here to see him. Needn't mention the names. He doesn't know me."

When Santry, with the instinct of his kind, loosened his guns in their holsters, Trowbridge reached out and took them away. He could not trust the old fellow in his present mood. He intended to sound the Senator, to prove him, to threaten him, but the time to shoot him was not yet.

"I'll keep 'em for you," he said soothingly and dropped the guns into the pockets of his coat. "I'm going to take you up with me, for I want to see the effect of that face of yours, looking the way it does now. But I'll do the talking, mind! It won't take long. We're going to act some, too."

There was no such effect upon Rexhill, however, who was too much master of himself to be taken off-guard in a game which had reached the point of constant surprise. The rancher was not conciliatory, for the meeting was frankly hostile, but he did not appear to be perturbed by it. He had not supposed that the extremes he had sanctioned could be carried through without difficulty, and he was prepared to meet anything that was likely to be offered by the enemy.

"Sorry to see you, Lem; don't know me. I'm a ranch-owner about here. My name is Trowbridge."

"Yes," the host nodded. "I've heard of you. I know your friend there by sight." He waved his hand toward Santry, who lingered for a moment over the word friend. "That's not the name for him for number—"

"Yes, it is a warrant out for one of your—friends—too, Tug Bailey, also for murder." Trowbridge had hoped that mourning would eventuate from this bit of repartee, but it was plain that he knew that the news must have surprised Rexhill, but he did not show surprise. "Ye Just escaped a lynching, that's how it's here. I'm here to tell you that Wade, whom you know, has been kidnaped from his one room."

The rancher checked Santry in an exclamation of rage.

"From his own range, in broad daylight. His friends, I represent them all, mean to find him, and it has occurred to me that you might want to join in our search for him."

"Just why has that idea occured to you?" calmly said Rexhill, as though his attitude were merely one of natural curiosity. "I'd like to know."

A bit baffled by this attitude of composure, Trowbridge hesitated, for it was not all that he had expected to meet. If the Senator had flown into a passion, the cattle man would have responded with equal heat; now he was less sure of himself and his ground. It was possible, after all, that Tug Bailey might have been animated in the shooting by some personal grudge against Jensen; or, at the worst, had been the tool of Moran alone. One could hardly associate the thought of murder with the very prosperous-looking gentleman, who calmly faced them and twirled his eyeglasses between his fingers.

"Why should that idea have occurred to you? So far as I am informed, Wade is also under a warrant of arrest for complicity in this same murder; in addition to which, he has broken into the jail here and burglarized my office. It seems to me, if he has been kidnaped, as you say, that I am the last person to have any interest in his welfare, or his whereabouts. Why do you come to me?"

This was too much for Santry's self-restraint.

"What's the use of talkin' to him?"

The rattle had ceased forever.

he demanded. "If he ain't done it himself, don't we know that Moran did it for him? 'To hell with talkin'!'" He shook his grimy fist at Rexhill, who spared himself the annoyance of the sight by the simple expedient of looking in another direction.

"That is why we are here," said Trowbridge, when he had gotten Santry quiet once more. "Because we have good reason to believe that, if these acts do not proceed from you, they do proceed from your agent, and are responsible for what he does, if I know anything about law. This man Moran has carried things with a high hand in this community, but this time he's come to the end of his rope, and he's going to be punished. That means the end of your rope, too, if he's acted for you." The cattle man was getting into his stride, now that the first moment of embarrassment were passed. His voice rang with authority, which the Senator was quick to perceive, although like any no evidence that he was impressed. "Has he been acting for you, that's what we want to know?"

"My dear fellow—" Rexhill laughed rumblingly—"if you'll only stop for an instant to think, you'll see how absurd this is."

"A frank question for a frank answer," Trowbridge persisted. "Has he been acting for you? Do you, at this moment, know what has become of Wade, and where he is?"

"That's the stuff!" growled Santry, whose temples were throbbing under the effort he made to hold himself within bounds.

"I do not!" The Senator spoke boldly. "But I am quite free to say that I would not tell you, if I did."

Santry seemed about to spring upon him and rend him as a mountain lion does its prey.

"You're a liar!" he roared, struggling in Trowbridge's grasp. "Let me at him. By Gawd, I'll make him talk!"

"Put that man out of this room!" Rexhill had arisen in all of his ponderous majesty, aroused to wrath at last. His pudgy finger shook as he pointed to the door, and his fat face was congested. "I'm not here to be insulted by a jailbird. Put him out!"

The light of exultation gleamed in Trowbridge's eyes, although he still kept tight hold on Santry, for this was the sort of thing he had expected to meet. He had not thought that Rexhill would confess complicity in the kidnaping so early in the game; but he had looked for some such outburst of anger, which would give him the chance he wanted to free his own mind of the burden of grief and rage by letting the other man know that they were on his trail. He had wanted the chance to make Rexhill feel that the hour of atonement was close at hand, and swiftly winging nearer, as the Furies of Moon-dance would strike him to the earth.

"Easy, now! We're going, both of us, but we won't be ordered out. You've said what I feared for you to say. You've denied knowledge of this thing. I think with Santry here that you're a liar, a God-forsaken liar!" He approached closer to Rexhill, who seemed about to burst with passion, and held him with a gaze that Jerry could not daunt. "May God help you, Senator, when we're ready to prove it against you. If you're in Moondance then, we'll ride you to hell on a rail."

"Now," the cattle man said to Santry, when they were safely in the hotel office, "you get out of town hot-foot. Ride to my ranch. Take this!" He scribbled a few words on the back of an envelope. "Give it to my foreman. Tell him to meet me with the boys, where the trail divides. We'll find Wade, if we have to kill every pony in the outfit."

The two men shook hands and Santry's eyes were fired with hope. The old fellow was grateful, at least, that the time for action had come. He had spent his youth on the days of gun legerdemain, and knew that the years had not lessened his skill with the Colt.

"I'll be right after you," Trowbridge concluded. "I'm going over to tell the little Purnell girl. She'd hear it anyway and be anxious. She'd better get it straight from me."

Lem Trowbridge had seen only one woman faint, but the recollection was indelibly impressed upon his mind. It had happened in his boyhood, at the home ranch where he lived, when a messenger had arrived with word of the death of the elder Trowbridge, whose horse had thrown him by stumbling in to a prarie-dog hole. The picture of his mother's collapse he could never forget, or his own bewilderment that that she, too, had passed away, leaving him parentless. For months afterward, he had awakened at night, crying out that she was dead.

The whole scene recurred to him, when he told Dorothy of Wade's disappearance, and saw her face flush and then pale, as his mother's had done. The girl did actually faint, because she was young and strong, but she came so near doing so that he was obliged to stretch her in his arms to keep her from falling. That was cruel, too, for he loved her, and she seemed so white and stricken that her recent searched depths in his nature that he knew not known existed. But presently she recovered, and swept from his mind all thought of himself in the passion of fear for what treaties in behalf of the man she loved.

"We'll find him, Dorothy, don't worry. I came around with bad news, I wanted you to know that we're right on the job." He patted her hand and assumed a show of confidence that he was far from feeling.

"But how can you find him in all these mountains? You don't know where to look."

He reminded her that he and Santry had been born in Moon Valley, and knew every crevasse and defile in the mountain-chain; but in his heart, he realized that to search all of these places would be the work of a second lifetime. He could only hope that chance, or good fortune, might lead them promptly to the spot they sought.

"Do you think that Senator Rexhill

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knows where Gordon is? Do you think he did this, too?"

"I don't know about that. I believe Moran is acting under Rexhill's orders, but I don't know how much of the details Rexhill was told. If I knew that, it would be easy. He'—his strong hands gripped the porch-rail until his knuckles showed white through the skin—"I'd choke it out of him."

"Oh, if there was only something I could do!" Her distress was so pitiable to witness that Trowbridge averted his gaze.

"We'll do it all, Dorothy. We'll do everything that can be done. Besides—A thought had occurred to him which would likely relieve her sense of helplessness. "Besides, we're going to need some one here in the town to keep us informed of what goes on."

"I'll find anything, how can I let you know?" she asked, her face brightening a trifle. "You'll be up in the mountains."

"I'll keep a man at the big pine. If you find out anything, ride to him with it."

"Oh, yes, I will, I will! That'll be something for me to do." She spoke with tears; she gave him both her hands. "Good-by, Lem."

"Good-by, Dorothy," he said solemnly, wringing her hands in his powerful grasp. "I know just how it is. We'll find him for you."

CHAPTER XV

TRAPPED.

WHEN WADE opened his eyes, after the assault upon him, he was first conscious of his throbbing head, and on seeking the reason of the pain, was amazed to withdraw his hands, stained with the blood which matted his hair. With an exclamation, he stumbled to his feet, still too dizzy to think clearly, but sufficiently aroused to be startled by the predicament in which he found himself.

He was at the bottom of a rock-walled fissure, about six feet wide by twenty feet in length. There was no way to climb out of this natural prison, for its granite sides, fifteen feet in height, were without crack, projection or other foothold; indeed, in the light of the afternoon sun, one facade shone like glass. If left there for any sustenance, he told himself he might as well be entombed; when, to his delight, he caught the sound of splashing water. At least, he would not perish of thirst, for at one end of the rocky chamber a tiny stream fell down the face of the cliff, to disappear finally through a narrow cleft. A draught of the cool water refreshed him somewhat, and when he had bathed his feverish head as well as he could, he sat down in the warm sand to think over the situation.

Now that his brain was clearing, he knew that his capture was the work of Moran, doubtless by way of revenge for that previous meeting, although what shape this revenge was destined to take, the cattle man could not fathom. Doubtless, he would have left him to his left to starve to death in this cul-de-sac in the hills. The thought of all that he and the cattle interests in Moon Valley had suffered through Moran, lashed the rancliman temporarily to fury; but it soon passed, for he only realized that it increased the pain in his head, without going to solve the problem of escape. The prospect of being left in this prison seemed remote, for the one glance at its precipitate walls had shown him that not even a mountain-goat could scale them. Help, if it came at all, must come through Santry, who could be counted on to rouse the countryside. The chunk of the old man's grief sickened Wade, for he was too familiar with the vast number of cash hidden pockets in the cabin of mountains to believe that his friends would soon find him. Doubtless, before then Moran would show his hand, in which for the present were all the trumps.

It was characteristic of the cattle man that, with fullest realization of his danger, should come the utmost calm. He had seen Moran under stress, and he called a man of iron nerve, for that quality of courage is not so often a virtue as the lack of a nerve system. He who is courageous because he knows no fear is not so brave by half as he who gauges the extent of a peril and rises superior to it. Wade's courage was of the latter sort, an ascendency of the mind over the flesh. Whenever danger threatened him, his nerves responded to his need with the precision of the taut strings of a well-attuned musical instrument under a master hand. He had been more nervous, many was the time, over the thought of the result of his punchers riding out a stampede, than now that his own life seemed threatened.

Philosophically shrugging his broad shoulders, he rolled and smoked a cigarette, but the quiet was intolerable, the smoke made him a bit sentimental, what with the slight dizziness still remaining from the blow. His thoughts was less concerned about himself than he was about Santry and Dorothy; particularly Dorothy. The knowledge of the sort had been needed to make him appreciate how closely she had grown into his life. He had always liked her very sweet to him, but he told himself that he would not have worry about that, for he could not hope to see her again. Each of Helen Rexhill he thought only with a sense of distaste. She was altogether selfish, but she had a redeeming feature in her father's depredations, but certainly she countenanced them by her presence in Monticello, and made his action look so poorly in contrast with Dorothy Purnell that Wade could not recall his former interest in her without a sorry heart. Even if high good fortune should enable him to escape from his prison, he could not hope that the family were too far removed from his own ever again to be bridged by the tie of friendship. He could not even blame the daughter for the misdeeds of the parent, but the old sentiment could not be revived, for the two interests could never be mingled with his own. It was not for Helen that the instinct of self-preservation was fighting in him, nor was it in her eyes that he would look for the light of joy over his rescue, if rescue came.

He smoked numerous cigarettes, until the waning of his supply of tobacco led him to reverently consider the matter of craving for the weed. Realizing that even if his friends were within stone's throw of him they could not possibly find him unless he gave some sign of his presence, he got to his feet and making a trumpet of his hands, shouted lustily. He repeated the hail a dozen times, or more, and was about to sink back with a sigh of despair, when he had heard footsteps approaching on the rocks overhead. He had little idea that a friend was responding to his call, but being unarmed, he could do no more than crouch against the wall of the cliff, while he scanned the opening above him.

Presently, there appeared in the opening the head of Goat Ryan, the gunman whom Wade knew as a member of Moran's band of ruffians.

"How?" drawled the Texan, by way of greeting. "Feelin' pretty good?" When the ranchman did not reply, his inquisitor seemed amused. "Say, I reckon it's like this here always makes me laff. It sure does me a heap of good to see you all corralled. Don't it look like it, too? Mebbe you'd like to know that it was my hand brung you down. I was sure mighty glad to get a crack at you, too, after the way you-all done us up that night at the ranch."

"So I'm indebted to you for that, eh?" Wade spoke casually as though the matter were a trifle not worth mentioning. He was trying to think how he could get Neale to set him free. Unfortunately, he had no money on him, and he concluded that the Texan would not think promises worth dealing in.

"Sure, I reckon you want to see the boss, don't you? Well, he'll be comin' right on over. Just now he's eatin' a mess o' bacon and eggs and cawfee, over to the camp. Gawd, I'm hungry, cawfee, too! Like to have some, eh?" Wade refused to play Tantalus to the lure of this temptation and kept silent. "Here he comes now."

"Is he all right?" the cattle man then heard Moran say, as Neale withdrew from sight.

"Yep," the Texan answered.

The ranchman instinctively braced himself against whatever might befall him. Possibly the agent had spared him in the timber-belt to torture him here; he did not know whether to expect a bullet wound or a knife-thrust, the next instant, but he was resolved to meet his fate courageously, and as far as was humanly possible, stoically. To his surprise, Moran's tone did not reveal a great amount of venom.

"Hello, Wade. Find your quarters pretty comfortable, eh? A bit of a shock to you, no doubt, but then shocks are in order in Moon Valley just now."

"Moran, I've lived in this country many years." Wade spoke with an suavity which he hinted at the danger peril to the other had the two been on anything like equal terms. "I've mixed with many Blackjacks in that time, but the worst of them was regarded by more of the spark of manhood than there is in you."

"Is that so?" The agent's face darkened under the flow of anger, but he restrained himself. "Well, you'll pass up these assertions until after our business is done. You and I've got a few scores to settle, and you may bet that I'll get them all the time comes to go to them, son. It isn't time yet, although maybe the time isn't so very far away. Now, see here." He leaned over the edge of the cliff to display in his hand a folded paper and a fountain pen. "There is a quitclaim deed to your ranch, fully made out, and witnessed, needing only your signature to be legal. Sign it."

Wade started, for this denouement was so preposterous that it was impossible for him at the real reason behind his capture. He could scarcely believe that so good an lawyer as Rexhill would be blind to the fact that such a paper, secured under duress, would have no validity under law. He looked at the agent in amazement.

"I know what you're thinking, of course," Moran read his mind. "You're not fools. I've got here, besides the deed, a check made out to you for ten thousand dollars." He waved it in his hand. "You'll remember that we made you that offer once before. You declined it then, but I reckon that you'll change your mind now. If you do, you'll indorse the check and I'll deposit it for you in Monticello."

The ranchman's face fell as he caught the drift of this complication. That ten thousand dollars represented only a small part of the value of the ranch was true, but many another man had sold property beneath its worth for cash, and a recently good check for ten thousand dollars, bearing his indorsement, were deposited to his credit in the bank, would go far to offset any charge that he might later bring of duress. To suppose that he had been trapped in the hills would be no more unreasonable than to suppose that a man of Rexhill's prominence would not be prepared for such an adversary. The question would become one of personal probity, with the balance of power on the agent's side.

"Once we get a title to the land, a handle to fight with, we shan't be bothered much," Moran's laugh at you." That seemed to Wade to be true. "If you accept my offer, I will see you safe out of the country, and our scores can go over to another time. I assure you that I'm as anxious to get a settlement as you are, but for this time, I'll not take advantage of you. You'll have a fair start to get away. On the other hand, if you refuse, you'll be left here without food. Once, each day, I'll visit you; at other times, you'll be left to your own resources. I prefer to entertain himself by baiting you. You'll be perfectly safe here, believe me."

Wade was torn simultaneously, between fires of professional pride, at the thought of successfully completing the work that he had started in Moon Valley; and of exultation at the prospect that his suffering while gagged for a night might have misled Moran for a thousand fold through Wade's refusal to sign the quitclaim.

"It's plain speech," said Wade, pale but calm, "you propose to starve me to death."

"Exactly." The agent spoke cheerfully. "If I were you, I'd think a bit before answering."

Before the cattle man was in the fullest flush of physical vigor, the lust of life was strong in him. Never doubting that Moran meant what he said, Wade was on the point of compliance, thinking to assume afterwards the burden of struggle which he had to regain the ranch property. His manhood rebelled at the idea of coercion, which he felt, Moran had wished to spare himself; it seemed to him better that he should live to continue the fight. He most likely would be called a fool for the taunt of cowardice, which had already floated about Moondance in connection with himself, during the range cattle controversy. True, the charge had sprung from those who liked him not, but Wade knew himself to be no coward, and he would not feed such a report now by yielding to Moran. Without the knowledge of a later flight, the fact that he had knuckled under to the agent could never be lived down. The success on he had won had been achieved by playing a man's part in a man's world. Nothing that life could offer him could be sweeter than such an epitaph.

"I tell you what I'll do, Moran." The cattle man's gaze was like the flash of a polished rapier. "Give me a hand out of here, or come down yourself. Throw aside your gun, but keep your knife. I'll allow you that advantage. Meet me face to face! D—n you, be a man! Anything that you can gain by my signature, you can gain by my death. Get the best of me, if you can, in a man's fight. Pah!" Wade spat contemptuously. "You're a coward, Moran, a dirty coward! You don't dare to fight with me. I'll get out of here—somehow I will—and when I do, by God, I'll corner you, and I'll make you fight."

"Get out? How?" Moran laughed the idea to scorn. "You'll be a long look for you from now to next election day. They'll never find you. Rot away, if you choose, for you'll get no help from me, even if you die within sight of your ranch. You ought to die. You know too much."

"Yes," said Wade, grimly. "I know too much. I know enough to hang you, you murderer. Who killed Oscar Jensen? answer that! You did it, or you had it done, and then you tried to put it on Santry and me. The country's too hot to hold you, Moran. Your goose is cooked, no matter what happens to me."

"I'm holding four aces now." Moran grinned down upon the rancher. "And the cards are stacked."

Left alone, Wade rolled himself another cigarette from his scant hoard of tobacco. Already, he was hungry, for the approach of evening, and he had the appetite of the healthy man. The knowledge that he would be denied food made him feel the hunghrier, until he resolutely put the thought of eating from him. He threw himself down on the face of the rock, was a godsend, though, and he drank frequently from it. Then he sent for sleep.

chills creep up his spine. Stooping, he picked up a fragment of rock; although he felt the futility of such a weapon, it was all that was at hand. Certainly, whoever approached, was moving with the utmost stealth, which argued an attack of some sort. Drawing back the hand, which held the rock, the cattle man shrank into a corner of the fissure and waited. Against the starlit sky, he had an excellent view of the ledge above him, and possibly with a careful aim, the rock might serve well against the one assailant, at least.

The pat-pat grew nearer and stopped, at last, on the edge of the pocket. A low catlike "woof" relieved Wade's mind of the thought of a human enemy. If the sound had been louder, he would have said "Bear!" but as things were, the visit seemed more likely from some prowling cougar, or mountain-lion. He had much fear of the latter, for such beasts were notorious cowards, and when, presently, a pair of shining eyes peered down into the fissure, he hurled the rock at them with all his force. His aim was evidently true, for with a scream of pain, the animal sprang back.

But just as amongst the most pacific of human races, there are some brave spirits, so amongst the cougars there are a few which possess all the courage of their jungle kinsmen. Actuated by overwhelming curiosity and by a thirst for blood, the creature returned again and again to the face of the cliff. After the third thrust, Wade was able to wound the beast with the rocks, although his efforts had the temporary effect of frightening it. Gradually, however, it overcame its fear of him, and was restrained from springing upon him, he knew, only by the impossibility of getting out of the fissure, after having attacked him. Baffled and furious, the lion sniffed and growled about on the rocks above, until the ranchman blanched with the fear that some misstep would send the snarling beast sprawling on top of him.

He picked up the broken clasp-knife and waited for this fear to come true, whatever blade would be of little use, but it was better than to meet the cougar with only his hands. He could save him from its keen teeth and claws.

This thrilling story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber to this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

NEAR TO NATURE.

"He's such a fine man, the one Gertie Flirk is going to marry," said the woman embroidering a dolly. "What I especially like about him is his devotion to nature and outdoor sports."

The woman with the obvious cold in her head groaned. "Stop her!" she moaned frantically. "Stop Gertie before it is too late! Look at me! My husband loves nature, too—and if I hadn't been born to be hanged I'd have been dead long ago from pneumonia. We went back to our cottage at the lake after we got children in school and my husband said I should now have a real rest and bit of recuperation before the winter season. So he decided we'd better go fishing.

"Now, I am an active person, and fishing is my idea of nothing to do. I told Henry I had a million letters to write and all his stockings to mend, but he never heard me. When he gets an idea you might as well throw up your hands and knock you head on the ground three times, because it's all over, and it's the wise person who knows it; but there are times when I still struggle feebly.

"So we went fishing.

"When he mentioned incidentally that we should have to go seining first for the minnows I let out several feeble yawns that made no more impression on him than a grasshopper.

"He said seining would be a perfectly nice, healthy exercise for me and that he would do all the hard part. All I had to do was walk along the shore hanging on to one end of the seine while he struggled through the waves with the other, his hip rubber boots saving him from actual contact with the icy water.

"That seine may have been a harmless, well conducted thing ordinarily, but when it saw me coming it arose on its hind legs and proceeded to buck. It pulled me into the water over my shoe tops twice, and then when we tried to land it the wind, which was pretty high, simply lifted it in the air, twisted it over, and showered me with all the minnows, a small turtle and a lot of sticky seaweed stuff.

"I shrieked for help, but there was no response. When I had got all the fish out of my ears and neck I saw Henry was on the other end of it up in the seine. He was fighting like a giant whale, but I rescued him at last. He said it was all my fault for not handling the net expertly and that we'd try again for the minnows if I'd use my brains.

"This time I broke my back keeping the pole at my end of the seine pushing along the ground ahead of me, as per orders. We dragged through an acre of water and then Henry rounded in to shore, with low blasings to me to do thus and so and will orders not to do this and that.

"I obeyed his commands with strict attention to details.

"'We've got a big catch this time!' Henry cried, triumphantly, as we landed the seine right side up.

"Breathlessly we laid it open—and it contained two big snags or roots, an empty pickle bottle and some weeds. I am a dutiful wife and I won't tell you the piece Henry recited to me when he had. It consisted of brief exclamations mostly.

"By the time we had really trapped enough minnows I was drenched to the knees and Henry had received most of the wild waves in the tops of his rubber boots. Then he said we must hurry to the dock because it was growing late for fishing. I had on a sweater, a heavy coat and my head wrapped up, and I felt as frolicsome as a baby elephant. Henry was a thing of beauty in some nondescript wrappings that he reserved for the country.

"Then we sat and fished. The cold wind whistled and my nose was purple. Every once in a while Henry would say fatuously: 'Isn't this great? Just breathe this air!' and I'd say: 'I do, by golly, of course!' Then he would say: 'Are you warm enough, Isabella?' And I, being a perfect wife, would nearly crack my frozen face, smiling and murmuring cheerfully: 'Tb just roasting to death, Hedry!'

"Then he'd remark that it certainly was queer the way the fish didn't bite, and what on earth could be the trouble? Once he had a nibble and it caused great excitement among us. I know I almost rolled into the lake, because I leaned over and was so muffled up I couldn't move hand or foot to right myself.

"When the sun was sinking low a native rowed by and told us that nobody had caught a fish off that dock since the middle of summer, so then we picked up our minnow pail and went home.

"Henry asserted that he had had a delightful time, but there was something lacking in the occasion to me. And I suspect Henry's sincerity, for when I asked him how I should keep the minnows he said to hand the minnows or to put them in a bird cage and feed them marmalades, for all he cared. We haven't been quite content to each other since.

"So, I say, warn Gertie Flikins in time if her man loves nature."

"It's too late," said the woman embroidering the dolly. "Besides, why should Gertie Flikins hope to escape all the troubles of life?"

No Prejudice.

A worker in one of the mission settlements was speaking to some waterfront boys with reference to Roman history. He touched upon the doings of Nero, giving a vivid picture of the cruelty of the Emperor. Then he began to ask a few questions.

"Boys, what do you think of Nero?"

Silence, broken only by an uneasy shifting of the lads in their seats.

"Well, Clancy," said the lecturer, making an individual appeal, "what do you think of Nero? Would you say he was a good man? Would you like to know him?"

Clancy hesitated. Finally, after again being urged to reply, he did so in these words:

"Well, he never done nothin' to me."

* * *

He Took It.

This is a cold and unsympathetic world when one's funds are low. But there is always one commodity to be had in abundance—advice.

Conrad Timms found himself the possessor of a gnawing hunger and eleven-pence. He decided to see what that sum could accomplish by way of a meal. He entered a London restaurant, seated himself at an unoccupied table, and studied the menu. A waiter approached.

"I—er—want your advice, waiter," said Timms, smiling up at him. "The truth is, I am very hungry; I have only—er—elevenpence in the world, and I want to know what you would advise me to get."

"My advice to you, sir," said the waiter, gently taking up the menu, "is to get another restaurant."

* * *

Sylvia.

How beautiful Sylvia looked that morning! The clear Virginia sunlight played upon her, and her brown hair glistened like burnished gold. Her great gray eyes, twin stars, looked straight into mine, and I wondered what thoughts they hid. Nearer and nearer I drew to Sylvia, and I could feel her breath, sweet as a clover field in June, on my warm cheek. Sylvia, Sylvia, Sylvia.

A harsh voice rang out.

"You want to be keerful o' that there Sylvia," it said, "'cause she kicks wus than any cow I ever milked."

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Up to Them.

Little James, aged 6, had been taught to pray each night for all his relatives and friends, and consequently the last had grown quite large. So one night, when it came time for the customary prayer, he refused to say them.

"Well, well, James!" said his mother. "Why won't you say them? All good little boys say their prayers."

"Yes, but I'm too tired."

"Oh, say, that's no excuse. Come now, that's a naughty boy."

"Well," protested James, "I guess I'll have to. But, anyhow, I'm not going to pray for everybody. I'm not going to lot of 'em out. Some of 'em will have to save themselves."

A Costly Infirmity.

A lady whose son was about to enter a university in one of our great cities was invited to a dinner party. She should get rooms in a first-class boarding house. Accordingly she went to the agent and said:

"I shouldn't do one of the houses they visited said: "I will let this excellent room on the second floor at a reduced rates because there is a woman next door who plays the piano all day."

"Oh," said the mother, "this won't trouble my son much—he's quite deaf."

"Ah," said the landlady "in that case I must charge him the full price."

Wanted Curly Hair.

Mr. Smith, won't you please talk to me?

"No, certainly, my little girl. But what do you want me to talk about?"

"About you, please; talk like you did when you were talking to yourself in the library when the dog jumped at you? About its eyesight, and manners and the way you talked made her hair curl."

Cost of Wooing.

Some time since Charles Abner courted and married the beautiful Ellen Estelle. One evening several months later they were seated in their cozy little den, Miss Ellen Estelle reading a popular novel and Charles Abner looking over the sporting page.

"Charley, dear," finally remarked the little wife, "do you recall the time you proposed to me?"

"Why, yes," Father indifferently answered Charles Abner. "I think I remember it."

"Of course, you do," returned Ellen Estelle. "It was an expensive trip. I shall never forget the lovely words you spoke, and the noble sacrifices you promised to make. It must have cost you something to say those things."

"It did Ellen Estelle," responded Charles Abner, with a reflective sigh, "it cost me about two weeks' salary to hire the automobile."

"How much are your brooms today, mister?"

"Brooms? Brooms? Why, lady, we don't sell brooms at this counter."

"Then what's that sign 'Sweeping Reduction' doing up there? I thought you were selling brooms cheaper than usual."

REAL EFFICIENCY.

In frosty Lapland, we are told,
The daughter of the house must go
On bitter midnights to and fro
To guard the reindeer in the fold,
Lest hungry wolves should come to prowl
And eat them.

I'm sure I should not like her job.

Meantime, her brothers, warm and snug,
Dream happily of boubbe-cheer,
Or of fresh woods and pasture new,
As each reposes in his rug.
It must be great to be a Lapp—
No woman's fears will spoil your nap.

There's Celig, timorous and fair:
Could she kill wolves? She'd surely die
If any mouse came stealing nigh.
She dreads a sudden draft of air.
She never walks, she calls her car—
Her Prince Charming would not bear her far.

Next time she wakes me up to say
That she hears burglars I'll not rise;
Instead I'll calmly close my eyes,
While she finds comfort where she may.
If she insists that she's afraid
I'll tell her of the Lapland maid.

Why They Laughed.

At a county fair in Jersey one of the fattest visitors sat down in a pavilion to rest her weary feet for a moment. She couldn't breathe why every one who passed was so amused. Since she is very sensitive on the subject of her size, she concluded it was the cause of this amusement and so she decided to search for a less conspicuous seat. She glanced around and found a bench sitting in front of the guessing cake table, directly under the placard:

"Guess my weight and I am yours."

Not Exactly Flattering.

That oft-waged argument of the wonderful progress in all things that the present generation had made held sway again.

This time two elderly ladies had chosen it as the theme for their usual early morning gossip.

"Yes, 'tis a wonderful age," one was saying. "Do you know, Jahn, that we ourselves are much more clever than our fathers, and that they, in their turn, were wiser than their fathers?"

This was a hard nut for John to crack. He pondered a while, but the words were, to say the most of them, of quite a puzzling nature.

But, after a long period of meditation, he ventured a mild remark to the effect:

"Well, if that's so, Gerge, what a big lump of a fule yer grandfather must 'a' been, to be sure!"

"Yes, papa, I was once guilty of a mistake, an' I guess I ain't forgot all about it yet."

"Indeed! Well, you can take the axe and chop a few cords out of that woodpile."

The Vicious Trout.

The enthusiastic angler was telling some friends about a protracted fishing trip to a lake in Colorado which he had just returned from.

"Are there any trout out there?" asked one friend.

"Thousands of 'em!" replied the angler. "Will they bite easily?" asked another friend.

"Will they? Why, they're absolutely vicious. A man has to hide behind a tree to bait a hook."

A Prisoner of War.

A British soldier in Belgium was one morning wending his way to camp with a fine rooster in his arms, when he was stopped by the police, who wished to know if he had been stealing chickens.

"No, sir," was the reply. "I saw the cock fellow sitting on the wall, and I ordered him to crow for England, and he wouldn't; so I just took him prisoner."

Accurate Measurement.

Johnny was sent to the cellar to draw a pitcher of cider. When he got back the guest commended him.

"You must have good judgment to have filled the pitcher so accurately in the dark without running it over."

"Oh, that ain't nothin'," replied Johnny. "I've see, when the cider got up to the first joint of my thumb I stopped."

One Step Toward It.

"But riches do not bring happiness!" retorted the lover.

"I know that," replied the sweet young thing; "but riches will buy an automobile, and if you have an automobile you can go after happiness."

A Difficult Feat.

A stout woman with a considerable tonnage had cultivated the habit of boarding cross-town cars when hundreds of others were left behind, and she always hoped to remain in comfort without annoying any one by overlapping.

On one occasion she handed an attendant her two tickets, as usual.

The attendant scrutinized them, then looked at her.

"Are you going to occupy the other seat, madam?"

"Are you going to occupy them both, sir?" retorted the lady indignantly.

Every one was silent, but the cents are on opposite sides of the aisle!

Not the Agent.

A bound boy, getting off a train at a suburban station, said to a boy standing near:

"My boy, I am looking for the corporation's new block of semidetached houses. How far are they from here?"

"About twenty minutes' walk," said the boy.

"Twenty minutes!" exclaimed the house hunter. "Nonsense! The advertisement said five."

"Well," replied the boy. "You can believe them or the advertisements, whichever yer want. But I ain't tryin' to make no sale."

The Price.

Two-thirds of Jones' makeup is cowardly, the other third wit. A short time ago he met his neighbor proudly displaying a valuable horse. "That is a fine horse you have there, Brown," he exclaimed cordially. "How much did you give for him?"

"I gave my note," was the crisp rejoinder.

"Well, you got him cheap," said Jones.

Hank—"Bill, what's grandeista?"
Bill—"Guys that drink grape juice!"

He Was Interested.

Wife—"You seem to find something very interesting in that paper. What are you reading?"

Husband—"The Woman's Page."

"Well, I am glad you have at last awakened to the vast importance of woman's place in civilization."

"Yes, indeed. I've struck some mighty fine cooking recipes."

His Plans.

She—"You know, my angel, it will have to be a case of love in a cottage."

She—"That will be just heavenly. Where is the cottage?"

He—"Er—I haven't got the cottage yet. You see, I am saving up money for a bicycle first; much cheaper than a horse, you know."

Artist—"Poor fellow! Have you been the victim of a railway accident?"
Nagsha—"Worse than that! I've gone back to my wife!"

An Agreeing Couple.

Clerk—"I'd like to get a week off, sir, to attend the wedding of a friend."

Employer—"A very dear friend, I should say, to make you want that much time."

Clerk—"Well, sir, after the ceremony she will be my wife."

Association.

"A man is known by the company he keeps."

"Yes," replied Miss Cayenne, "and many are unknown by the company they pretend to keep."

Way Back.

The Lady—"Does the way the dog has a long pedigree?"

The Dealer—"Yes, marm 'e has. One of 'is ancestors chewed off the corner of Mr. Marcy Charity an' another of 'em bit a hole in good King Halfred. Yes, marm."

Brutal.

She—"Before we were married you praised the beauty of my eyes."

He—"Well, I didn't notice you squinted until your rich uncle died without leaving you anything."

Clerk—"Mr. Goldbug, as I am to marry, I would like more salary."
Boss—"How much more you want?"
Clerk—"Two dollars a week."
Boss—"My gracious! How many women are you going to marry?"

Cavalry Instructor—"From where did you receive instructions to dismount, sir?"
Raw Recruit—"From headquarters, sir."

All Stirred Up.

The Tourist (passing a week end in the village, to the oldest inhabitant)—"Well, I don't know what you do here, dear, it's certainly the most dead and alive yet show I was ever in."

The Oldest Inhabitant—"Ah, 'e ought to wait till next week, sur, an' you'll see how the place 'ull be stirred up then."

The Tourist—"Why, what's on next week?"

The Oldest Inhabitant—"Plowin'."

Essence.

Teller—"How did you happen to pick out that flavor of a girl for a wife from among all the dozen whom you knew?"

Bean—"I noticed she occasionally put on something heavier than a lace wrap when we had a blizzard. Also she sometimes wears overshoes when it is raining hard. I thought these things displayed rare good sense.

"Exceedingly rare for those days young man. You have selected a gem."

Marie—"What a lot of cigarettes he must have smoked to dry himself up like that!"

Her Wise Papa.

She—"Papa says that when coming to see him must not come to a street car subscriber."

He—"Really! Does he expect me to walk all this distance?"

She—"Of course not. He says all he asks is that you will come in a carriage hired by the hour."

Rights of Pedestrians.

Winks—"What are you carrying that lawn around for?"

Blinks—"I'm going to blow when I want automobilists and bicyclists to get out of my way."

A Nation of Inventors.

Foreign Visitor—"To what do you ascribe the remarkable inventive ingenuity of Americans?"

Native—"Certain mothers!"

"I do not understand."

"A boy with that kind of a mother has got to cultivate his inventive faculties if he is going to have any fun."

Heard Downtown.

"Please my face is dirty," said the office boy in the elevator, "what business is that of yours? You ain't my father."

"No, but I'm bringing you up," replied the elevator man.

FATHER'S RUDE AWAKENING

King of the World

Or, THE GREAT WAR'S END

By Conrad Kallone

So Smith was the tall man!

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Begun in No. 21, May 22. Subscriptions can begin with that number, or back copies can be obtained from newsstands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER V.

IT WAS nine o'clock the following morning before Graham Ludwig returned to his office. He had deliberately talked himself out of going back after leaving Isabel at her hotel the night before. He was conscious that he wanted to believe her story and to believe in her, and he did not want to prove himself wrong before such action was necessary. So he had argued that it was not necessary for him to go back to the office, since, if the papers were not in the bench drawer, as she had told him they would be, there still would be time in the morning to make out duplicates and be ready for the conference at the White House.

He was so thoroughly convinced that he had been the victim of a conspiracy the previous evening that he gave no thought of any other explanation, and he was confident that he would be expected at the White House according to the original appointment. So he did not even take the precaution of telephoning to the President's office to verify his conclusion.

Graham sighed heavily as he entered the office. He was distressing to have to think of Isabel as an underhanded, scheming, plotting foe. He would have much preferred to continue to think of her as a very attractive young woman whose plainness was not plainness at all. Until the most possible moment he put off the task of looking for the papers, fearing that he might not find them in the drawer, convinced, in fact, that he would not find them. But finally it became necessary for him either to look or to go to work on a new set, so he shut his mouth firmly and pulled open the drawer and reached his hand in.

A grunt of satisfied relief followed. His hand touched a package of papers. He smiled when he drew them out and saw they were the ones he had placed in his pocket the night before. So far Isabel's veracity had been upheld. A quick glance through them revealed the further fact that all were intact. In addition there were several other scraps upon which he had scribbled notes. He recalled that they had been left scattered about his work-bench and desk, and smiled when he thought of Isabel gathering them up and placing them in the drawer. To others they were meaningless. To her they represented hours and days of study, and for that reason were valuable, though the conclusions drawn from them were fixed in his mind and no one could deprive him of them.

Again his brow was puckered as he tried to decide what Isabel was trying to accomplish. She might, of course, have made copies of the papers; there had been time for her to do this if she had, and she had stated, returned with the taxi and was not, in fact, the masked woman in the vacant house with the three men. Then, if she possessed the cleverness which he was tempted to credit her with, it was quite plausible that she should have returned the originals and tried to make him believe she was his friend, when he had caught her in the office.

"Yes," he sighed, as he spoke to himself, "that's probably the way of it. I'm sorry, too—terribly sorry. I thought possible for me to be—but glad her copies will do her no good."

Graham had no fear for his safety, and little fear that any one could secure his secret. So he was inclined to make little of the conspiracy against him, even though the German Government might be back of it. But on the way to the White House he recalled Katherine Schaefer and vaguely wondered if he might not enlist her aid to checkmate Isabel's activities. Katherine, though distantly related to the French ambassador, was more American than French, yet her sympathies undoubtedly were with the Allies. In fact, Graham knew they were—actively with the Allies. Naturally she would be glad to help one who wanted to help the Allies to end the war in a way that would cause no loss to France. Yes, he decided, he would give that matter a thought, and if the time or the opportunity arose he would sound Katherine.

He thought, too, that he might secure the help of Waldron and Smith. They were newspaper men, of course, and naturally searching for anything that was good "copy," but he also knew the peculiar code of honor among newspaper men which would shield them from any public things they ardently desired to use, if their promise of secrecy had been obtained on a basis of honor. He could not, however, which might wait. At present he needed no help; perhaps he might never need it.

The conference with the President and Secretary of War was very satisfactory. Both greatly commended Graham's action at Graham's claims, and quite apparently skeptical. He laughingly admitted that his tale was "a bit incredible."

"But I want you to remember," he said, "that I stand ready to convince you by actual demonstration."

"It would require that," the Secretary answered.

"Most assuredly," the President added.

"I am ready whenever you are," Graham responded. "We can go to Gloucester now, and return in time for the morrow morning and be back here tomorrow afternoon late."

"By one of the usual trains, or a special?" asked the Secretary.

"Regular trains."

The Secretary shook his head dubiously. "I don't know about that. It might be wise to keep the affair under cover—at least for a while—and the regular trains would make the visit of the President rather conspicuous."

"A special train then," Graham replied. "More conspicuous, but the President said quickly.

"The official yacht then," Graham cried exultingly. "That's the way to go. The President can go off for an inspection tour, and just drop into Gloucester. A few hours there and he can see all I want him to see, and he can continue his tour and none will be wise to the real purpose of the trip."

He became so enthusiastic as he talked that even the serious face of the Chief Executive broke into a faint smile.

And if you fail to come up to your promises, Mr. Ludwig," the President said quietly, "no one will know that the head of the Government has been off on a wild-goose chase."

"There will be no wild-goose chase, Mr. President."

This plan was ultimately agreed upon and Ludwig left the White House. The conference had consumed more time than he had been aware of and he was surprised to find himself ravenously hungry. He stopped at a little restaurant, frequented by the newspaper workers, for lunch. He hoped he might find Waldron or Smith to chat with, for he felt the necessity of talking about other matters than his own affairs, to seek relief from the tension under which he had been all morning.

He saw a number of acquaintances and nodded as he passed through toward the rear, to a little table in one corner which he remembered was Waldron's favorite place. The two correspondents were there and with them was Katherine Delano. Ludwig was glad to see her. The men greeted him eagerly. Ludwig knew they scented a news story. The girl was friendly, and Ludwig decided that he would like her when he got to know her better—perhaps well enough to ask her aid against Isabel's intrigues.

"Well, old man," Waldron chuckled, "tell us the news. You've had a long session at the White House."

Who told you?" Graham was startled. "A little bird, Ludwig," Smith put in. "Otherwise we'd know what you talked about and the result of your conference, and not have to try to warm it out of you."

"What did you talk about?" Katherine's expression as well as her words was sweetly solicitous. She leaned her chin on her hands and bent toward Ludwig. "It must have been very important, or interesting to keep the President occupied so long."

"It was—both." Graham smiled in good humor.

"And you're going to tell us about it?" the girl continued.

"Well—not exactly," Graham chuckled. "You see, Miss Delano, I'm next to my friends' little game. They knew they would have to get me a bit tell them upon their own questioning—after I'd made them promise not to—so they invegled you to act as bait for me."

"No—such thing!" She was indignant. "I was asking because—because——"

"You wanted to prove it," Smith finished. "The conference was satisfactory?" Waldron asserted, the seriousness of his manner giving an instant stop to the atmosphere of levity.

"Quite." Graham responded quickly. "Some of the details I hope it will not be long—I'll tell you more. I promise you I'll give you the first whack at the story."

"Something to do with uninterrepted wireless messages. I believe you said," Smith hazarded.

"Nothing doing now," Ludwig smiled. "Sorry, Smith, but I've got to keep my secret a little longer." The disappointed faces of all three—especially the girl's—cause him to decide on the spur of the moment to tell his kidnaping. "I've got something to tell you about, though, and I'm sure you'll be interested, even if you cannot publish this either—yet."

"Aw, what's the use?" Waldron grumbled.

"Just to interest a blase old thing like you," Graham retorted.

"Oh, do tell us—please," Katherine pleaded. "Don't keep us in attention to him, Mr. Ludwig."

"He never does," Waldron growled. "Well, go on with your fairy tale," he added, with assumed irritation. "What is it?"

"Oh, just a little thing," Graham replied lightly. "Last night it happened. I was—kidnaped."

Waldron sat up straight and stared at his friend. He was really surprised. Graham smiled at him and then glanced at the girl. She was leaning forward in amused expectancy in her eyes. Smith, too, was astonished. Waldron shook his head.

"Now, now, Graham, it isn't hot enough to affect you like that, and I don't believe your head's been turned just because you've had a talk with his excellency, the President of the United States of America."

"Fact, Waldy," Ludwig replied. "I was kidnaped last night, or abducted. Regular black-hand, Sunday-newspaper, dime-novel style. Thought I'd tell you boys about it and ask you to be my bodyguard."

"All right," Waldron said, with meek resignation, as he leaned back in his chair. "Give us the full, sickening, fearful details, little Charlie Ross. I warn you, before you start though, that you'll have a hard time convincing me it's true. You're neither young, handsome, nor rich, so what reason could any one find for kidnaping you?"

Ludwig was a good story teller and he told this story exceedingly well. He was pleased to note how he held the attention of all three, of Waldron especially. Some vague warning, coming almost unconsciously, and apparently from nowhere, caused him to omit all reference to Isabel, and also to the crooked little finger of the tall man and leader. In fact, he was scarcely conscious of the fact of these omissions, until his story was finished and Waldron was speaking lazily, though with great interest.

"Of course, Graham, it may not have been a joke some of your good friends put up on you. If it wasn't that, I don't know. Some of these numerous secret agents of foreign countries—they're thicker than flies about here—may have got the silly notion that you had something the bosses would like to have. Yes," he mused, "maybe that's it." He looked up with sudden interest. "Did they get anything?"

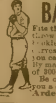
"Nothing to do them any good for anything," Ludwig replied laughingly. He looked slowly from face to face. His glance fell to the table, lingered a moment upon Katherine's brown-gloved hand, rested upon Smith's right hand spread upon the table and then darted away quickly lest the owner of that hand see that the eyes had noticed the strange crooked little finger with the drawn skin.

So Smith was the tall man and leader of the kidnapers! Thus Ludwig thought, but he succeeded in keeping his face from giving any sign of the discovery. Again he glanced into the face of each one. Then, watching Smith closely, he said slowly:

"Not a thing that would be any use to any one of them, not even to the tall man with the crooked little finger on the right hand."

Smith's expression did not change. Ludwig felt, rather than saw, a twitching of the muscles of the right hand, as if, on the spur of the moment they were trying to draw the telltale finger underneath the palm of Smith's hand. Katherine squealed, and in unison with the little exclamation her hand shot forward impulsively and closed over Smith's little finger.

Graham smiled. Waldron again sat up erect. The girl laughed in an embarrassed manner. Smith turned his hand



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over, palm upward, then held it up before them.

"It's a sort of birthmark, I suppose. My grandfather's little finger was the same way. I've found it rather common —though I once thought it a mark of exclusiveness."

No one replied.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN, after an awkward silence of several moments, Katherine had excused herself to keep an appointment and Smith had courteously offered his services as escort, Ludwig and Waldron sat down again and lapsed into a thoughtful silence. The correspondent watched with interest the face of his companion, wondering if the quick changes taking place there. Presently Ludwig spoke abruptly:

"No, there's no doubt about it. I'd know that finger anywhere, and I doubt if there is another like it in this city."

"You mean?" Waldron said questioningly.

"I mean that Smith was the tall man in command of the party that captured me in the spite of secretly some valuable papers relating to my newest and greatest invention." Ludwig spoke slowly and seriously.

"You might be mistaken." Waldron commented.

"I might be," Ludwig smiled gently. "The trouble is I am not—and I know I'm not. It was Smith."

"But why would a newspaper correspondent do a thing like that?"

"To get a story, do you suppose?" Ludwig was eager. He wanted to believe this had been the motive.

"No." Waldron shook his head slowly. "That would be too easy—even for a dare-devil of a newspaper reporter, and I've seen nothing to make me believe Smith is that sort."

"I'm sorry." Ludwig sighed. "I hoped that might be the explanation. Since it could be the only reasonable excuse him on that ground, there's nothing else to do but to suspect he is a spy in the service of some foreign government."

"Which one?" Waldron had lost all of his chubby indifference, and was sitting erect, his bright eyes sparkling.

"The British ambassador knows I am friendly," Ludwig replied slowly. "So he wouldn't start such a thing. The French ambassador knows I am friendly, and that eliminates him. The Russian ambassador will make his cue from the other two. That puts him out of it. Then there remains—"

"The Germans." Waldron interrupted eagerly.

"The Germans." Ludwig assented.

"But he's working for a New York and a Paris paper." Waldron ventured doubtfully.

"If he is in the service of the German secret service he would be quite likely to make such connections before taking up his new work here. His position as Washington correspondent for a New York and a Paris paper would be an excellent cover. See that it functioned completely. It might have fooled us indefinitely if I hadn't noticed that peculiar little finger."

"That's right," Waldron agreed.

They fell into a thoughtful silence. Five minutes passed, then five went by. Then the inventor spoke tensely:

"See here, Tom, I've got to have your help—as a friend and an American, you understand, but not as a newspaper man. Are you willing?"

Shoot, old man." Waldron smiled, relieved that the silence had been broken. "What can I do—that will not get me into trouble. I hate it, you know."

"You mean you hate not to be in it." Ludwig smiled sympathetically. "Well, I cannot promise trouble or no trouble, because I'm in the dark. But this I do know. I want to find out just who our friend William T. Smith is, and where he came from. We know one of the things he is trying to do. I want you to help me do this, and also to—" he hesitated—find out if Isabel Keppler is working with him."

"Hugh!" Waldron's face expressed curiosity. "You're interested, eh? Don't blame you. She's a mighty attractive little woman."

"And a niece by marriage of the German ambassador," Ludwig returned.

"Right-o. And for the same reason quite likely to be on chummy with Smith —provided Smith is working for the same gentleman. Then what?"

"Why—I don't know exactly." Ludwig was puzzled. "I'll have to wait for their next move. I want to know you are with me, eaky."

"I do anything. Waldron interrupted, "you have to fighting."

"Of course I could look help from our side, but I —"

"You don't want to show your hand—yet."

"Nor to tie my hands that way." Ludwig replied significantly.

Ugh!" Waldron's grunt was very expressive. "Anything more you can tell me now?"

"I'm going to ask you to wait a bit, old man." Ludwig said gently. "I'll tell you more as soon as I feel that I can. I don't'll you, though, that I'm anxious to have this information as quickly as possible—before tomorrow night."

Waldron reached out his fat hand and patted his friend's arm. "That's all right, Graham. Just tell me when you want to and what you want to. About this other thing—I think I can get you some dope on Smith in a hurry, through some newspaper friends here and in New York. The girl is a different problem. I can't promise much about her. I'll do the best I can."

Late in the afternoon Waldron reported to Ludwig, who joined him at the club when telephoned by the correspondent.

"You were right about Smith," Waldron began without delay. "His real name is Schmidt. Nobody seems to know that he is on good terms with the German embassy—in fact, on friendly terms. It seems that he has the run of the office. Of course, they are quite anxious at that office to get and keep on good terms with American newspaper men, but Smith is treated even better than the rest of us. No one seems to know anything more definite than that he is in the employ of the German secret service."

"Naturally he would try to keep such a thing from becoming generally learned," commented. "And what about Isabel—Miss Keppler?"

"Didn't learn much about her," Waldron continued. "She is related to the German ambassador, and is frequently at his office as well as his residence. Washington friends consider her a thorough American without any leanings one way or the other. Smith and Schmidt. She and Smith have been quite friendly ever since he came here six months ago, and no one who seems to know when they met, but the impression prevails that they knew each other before his arrival here."

It was evident to Waldron that his news displeased his friend. In fact, Ludwig's face altered so perceptibly that it meant that Waldron was tempted to try to sympathize with him.

"No, I don't see how you think," Ludwig interrupted. "I'm worrying about something else, Wally. Here it is." He told of Isabel's visit that night at his lodgings, the tale causing the chubby Waldron to prick up his ears. "Now," the inventor concluded, "I'm not afraid they'll hurt me. I'm not afraid of what they'll find out. I know they cannot get this secret away from me—"

"So there is a secret, and—"

"All the same," Ludwig ignored his friend's interruption, "I don't feel that I know just what to do after—if I know exactly her part in the conspiracy."

"And I don't blame you—unless—if I haven't read into a hazy idea of what this great secret is."

Waldron's manner showed that he felt slighted. He patted his shoulder.

"I'll tell you more tomorrow—on the train."

"I'm not going anywhere tomorrow," Waldron protested.

"Yes, you are going with me to Gloucester—on a business operation."

"Oh, am I? Why didn't you wait until you had me there before telling me I was going?" Waldron was indignant.

"Well, at that it might have been better policy." Ludwig laughed. "Now you'll be forget that little gratuity stunt and be a man. You're going with me to Gloucester. I don't care to have anyone know I am going. If I do what we suspect, he'll try to shadow me and follow me. If she—Miss Keppler—is trying him. If she—Miss Keppler—is trying him. We've got to shell in on my trail, too. We've got to dodge both of them—and that's double work. Have you seen Smith this morning? scene is he around this morning?"

Waldron shook his head. "Not a sign of him. Haven't even heard of him. Guess he's keeping under cover for a while."

"I wonder." Ludwig began slowly, "I wonder—"

"You'll forget it if you don't hurry."

"I was wondering if we could get some help from Miss Keppler."

"What sort of help?" Waldron demanded.

"Why it just occurred to me that she might keep Miss Keppler in sight, even occupied, so she wouldn't have an opportunity to watch me."

"You'd have to tell her something—more than you've told me," Waldron replied. "She doesn't know you as I do and wouldn't take so much on faith."

"She's French in sympathy, though," Ludwig answered. "I might try it."

"I wouldn't." Waldron said firmly.

"Why?"

"Don't care much for her—that's all."

"But why?" Ludwig persisted.

"Oh, she's too pretty."

"That's absurd, Tom."

"Maybe so," Waldron grunted. "But don't you remember how she tried to hide Smith's telltale little finger this morning?"

"Why, I thought she did that just because she was surprised."

Waldron leaned back and stared at his friend. "Graham Ludwig," he said caustically, "you may be an inventor. You may be able to see things that aren't yet come into existence, but you're mighty blind about seeing things right before your eyes. Don't be a fool where your eyes. Don't be a fool right before your eyes, besides—and—and about a pretty face, besides—another pretty face. If I don't miss my guess you've got something big, something of great importance to the whole world, and here you are letting yourself get all tangled up by a couple of girls Quit it! Forget 'em. That's my motto: Forget 'em when you've got real work to do."

Ludwig's face flushed, but his regard for his friend and his knowledge that Waldron meant only to help him, caused him to keep back the angry retort that sprang to his lips. He was smiling when at last he spoke.

"All right, Wally, I'll remember 'them kind words.' In the meantime I've some work to do and I suppose you have, too. I'll see you tomorrow. We start in the afternoon, late. I'll pick you up here and after we're on the train I'll tell you what train it is. Keep your eyes open and your ears, too."

Out on the street he stopped in thought. Then he decided that he would stop at Katherine's home, since it was only a little out of his way to the hotel where he was stopping. Ostensibly it would be only a social call, but he admitted that he might speak to her about Isabel if the opportunity arose, and perhaps enlist her on his side.

When he was a few steps from the house, the front door opened and Smith emerged, followed by Katherine. Ludwig stopped and stepped into a shadow cast by the lamp-post. He waited until the two had exchanged some sentences, Smith had told the girl good-by, and she had returned inside. The unexpected correspondent hurried away in the opposite direction from the inventor.

Ludwig passed by the house without stopping. As he walked along thoughtfully he admitted that Smith might have been paying only a social call, but the two had seemed quite friendly. Under the circumstances Ludwig decided that he would be quite careful about taking into his confidence any one who was friendly with Smith.

He was still wondering vaguely about them when he reached his hotel. A bellboy sought him out immediately with the information that he was wanted in Parlor C.

"Who is it, John?"

"Deed I don't know, Massa Ludwig. Jes' telephoned down an' ast to have you come up, suh, soon es you come in. Jes 'twas pow'ful important."

Wonderingly curious the inventor walked up the stairs to the parlor floor and sought the little room that he recalled was quite sheltered and cut off from the other public parlors. His surprise increased when he saw, standing before the window, looking pensively out upon the street, Isabel Keppler. His surprise increased when she greeted him effusively.

"Oh, Mr. Ludwig, you haven't seen Miss Delano since this morning, have you? I hope not. I hope you'll be—be careful what you say to her."

"Miss Keppler," he replied slowly. "I am honored again—" he accented the word significantly—"by a visit from you. I believe I haven't seen you since—ah—last evening."

She held out her hand with a frankness that almost made him ashamed of himself.

"Please answer my question, Mr. Ludwig." Her voice was soft, but the tone and manner with which she spoke was tensely serious. "It is very important."

"Evidently you think so," he countered, still suspicious of her and angry with himself for being so. "If, however, it will ease your evident anxiety, I will say that I have seen Miss Delano since this morning." A grasp caused him to pause an instant before adding: "But I have not spoken to her or to her—and your—friend, Mr. William T. Schmidt."

"Oh!" Her relief was very apparent "I am so glad! So she has had no chance to tell Schmidt—to tell about your appointment at Gloucester with—with very important personages."

"No," he admitted. Did this girl know anything definite about the arrangements with the President? Or was she only guessing. He spoke very slowly when he answered.

"No, she has had no chance to learn about—about—me. What you know, of course, you may pass along to her through your friend, Schmidt."

"You flatter me," she said, "I know much."

Isabel's laugh, gentle and musical though

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IT'S as easy as A-B-C to do a big week's washing with the wonderful Cascade Steam Washer. We guarantee it to do your washing. All big city laundries use live steam because it saves labor and makes clean sweet clothes quick.

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The Cascade Washer is made in two styles, Style "A" fits on any stove, which we hold as ordinary wash boiler.

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Equipped with Tungsten electric bulb and bull's-eye lens.

This latest and greatest invention in electric light makes a powerful, low-cost, "safety first" lantern or light.

It's the handiest, most serviceable illuminating device ever conceived for doing chores around the house, barn or garage. You can stand or hang it anywhere, the searchlight reflector can be moved to any angle. Always ready, instantaneous and absolutely safe around gas, gasoline, oil or hay, for it cannot ignite anything inflammable. It is clean; has no grease, heat or smoke.

To light simply turn switch. No matches to bother with in the wind or oil cans to keep filled. With ordinary use, one common dry battery will make the electric current to light the lamp many months.

You can obtain new batteries when needed in any town for 25 cents or less—Do not send to us for batteries.

FREE—We will send the attachment with electric bulb complete, except dry cell battery, absolutely free for a new or renewal subscription to the Blade and Ledger for $2.00 per year. In Canada $2.50.

BLADE AND LEDGER,

500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

it was, irritated him by its assurance.

"I am not bothering about how much or how little you may know."

"Oh, but you are, Mr. Ludwig," she calmly insisted. "You are very much worried just now over my friendship with a certain man. Concerning this I shall tell you one thing—no, two things, Mr. William T. South, American newspaper correspondent, is my friend. Mr. William T. Schmidt, confidential secret agent of Germany, is—not my friend. Is that clear? Is it understood?"

"Too much," he retorted. "And still you deny you were the woman at the vacant house last night!"

"How could I be there and at your office at the same time," she countered. "Listen, my friend, may not that woman at the house have been—well, may she not have been Miss Delane? Ah, that surprises you!"

"You seem to know a great deal."

"And you are wondering how much more I know?" Her confident laugh again rang out and irritated him. "Listen again, my friend. It seems that I can see your thoughts—the wondering of how much I may know about the plan to have——" She bent forward to him and her voice fell to a whisper—"to have his excellency, the President of the United States, personally stop at Gloucester while cruising on the official yacht, and witness the test of a certain invention which Mr. Ludwig has revised for the ending of all wars."

Ludwig sprang back and stared dully at her. The woman laughed and her face grew almost beautiful. He stepped quickly to her and caught her wrist fiercely.

"Curse—does Smith know this? Does any one else but you know it?"

"No one, my friend, unless you have told," she cooed. "I am sure you have told no one, since you did not have a chance to yield to the tempting suggestion that was sent you to confide in Katherine Delane."

"What on earth are you driving at?"

Mr. Schmidt has had a wide experience in the affairs of the world. He believes in the efficacy of hypnotism and mental suggestion. So does his—so does Miss Delane. That was what I was afraid of—that before I could warn you what it was, you might be entangled."

"You mean they have been trying to make me confide in her by silently suggesting such action to me?" Ludwig's astonishment grew.

"Yes," Isabel spoke quietly. "Now that you know they will be unable to influence you. I am glad. That is all, my friend. I am glad I could be of help to you."

She started to leave, but stopped at his silent request to wait.

"But—how did you learn of this—my plan?" he stammered.

"Perhaps—" her eyes twinkled—"perhaps I—sent you a suggestion that you tell me and—perhaps again—you told me—silently. Good night, my friend, and good luck."

She was gone before he could think of a reply to her strange speech.

(Continued next week.)

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

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YOU CAN MAKE MONEY SELLING FIGURE, smoked meats, dried fruits, canned goods, syrups and other staple groceries. Profits, 33 1-3%. Experience unnecessary. Big stock and push to tonics, prepared roofing and other goods in every day demand. Prices are right. Reference. We save consumers money. They like our goods because they are honest and economical. Successful some have been selling our goods in the same locality for years. One writes: "Here are my orders for this week, $146.00 profit." Another writes: "Last week made only $18.65; made $23.46 this week. Some do better." Others do better still. Now is a good time to establish your self a permanent, honorable, profitable business. You can work every day. Tells us your age, occupation and references. Any good bank will tell you that we are responsible and responsible. Address A. A. Hitch Mill Company, Wholesale Grocers, Chicago, Ill.

WHO ARE YOUR FRIENDS IF AT BANKS, etc., by photo-identification credentials in fine leather pocketbook; furnished with 15 to 50 latest insurance policies; total cost to person $1.00; profits $10 to $100 weekly. Highest commissions. Address Underwriters, 1346 Insurance Exchange, Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

A DOLLAR A MINUTE, CAN'T BE MADE with our goods or anybody's. But you can make good money with them. Honestly advertised, not sold in stores. Some just out and all sold at large profits. Write today for the best investment you ever made. S. Mfg. Co., Chicago.

AGENTS—SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED rugs, 11 each. Carter, Tenn., sold 15 in 4 days. Profit $27. Credit. Outfit free. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory. Sample rug postpaid, parcel post, prepaid, 50c. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

500 GOOD MEN WANTED QUICK ON big, quality-crazy campaign to introduce high grade toilet articles in homes. Experience unnecessary. Send postal. Details. E. M. Davis, 164 N. Wells Bldg., Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED—TO ADVERTISE OUR goods by distributing circulars, tack signs, collect. 50 cents an hour. Write for full particulars. The Favorit Company, 1431 West 51st, Dayton, Ohio.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS RELIable man and woman to introduce guaranteed hosiery, underwear, shirts, etc., to homes. Big profits; permanent; exclusive territory. Interwoven Mills, 585 Broadway, New York City.

YOUNG MAN, WORTH $1,000 CAN'T A salesman be sent out just for showing it to your friends? Then write Banner Tailoring Co., Dept. 1-B, Chicago, a big reliable firm of tailors, sales and a wonderful offer.

AGENTS SELL EVERY SCREEN DOOR watch made Automatic. Hundred per cent profit. Every home needs one. Write for sample offer. Write today. Burgess-Norton Mfg. Co., Geneva, Ill.

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MEN, WOMEN, NO CANVASSING. SELL Aloes. Good side line. Leave on trial. Commission 100% or more. Write today for sample free. Horner Manufacturing, 540, Pittsburgh, Pa.

PERMANENT, PROFITABLE WORK. WE, or all transportation charges paid. Supplies easy to distribute. Write today. Wholesale Supply Co., 2003 Twin Bldg., Omaha, Neb.

AGENTS SELL "A REPEATER" QUICK sales, big profits. Great labor saver. Pleases every housewife. Write for territory. Utility Mfg. Co., Chippewa Falls, Wis.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE $10 PER DAY for a little time with your spare? Go to the best article made. Geo. M. Ferree, Milan, Ohio.

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MEN AND WOMEN—EARN $75 WEEKLY. At home work compiling mailing lists. Worth knowing. Send stamp. Publicity, Dept. 1, Chicago.

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THOUSANDS JOBS OPEN TO MEN-WOMEN. $75 month. Vacation. Short hours. Sample. Quick. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for list U. S. Government positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute, Dept. W 30, Rochester, N. Y.

WE PAY $50 EACH FOR FARMERS' names. Send dime for contract. Bun, Leroy, Mich.

FOR WOMEN

LADIES INTERESTED IN A VERY USEFUL household article send name for circular or line for the article. Leonard & Smith, Lyon, N Y

MALE HELP WANTED

WANTED, MEN AND WOMEN TO QUALify U. S. Government examinations. Five thousand appointments to be made next few months. Full information about preparing for, and questions, etc. Write immediately for booklet, G-1624. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFfice, rural carrier vacancies coming. Good. Get prepared by former Government civil servant. Instruction and list free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

$10 PER 100 UPWARD PAID TACKING signs, distributing circulars. Outfit free. Send 6c stamps for price list paid secure territory. Shepard's Distributing Agency, Lobanon, N. H.

FIREMEN AND BRAKEMEN: $100 MONTH. No experience unnecessary; hundreds needed. Railway Association, Dept. P-34, St. Louis, Ill.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN WANTED; ALL railroads; $110-$250 month; experience unnecessary. Railway Association, Dept. P-34, Brooklyn N. Y.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THOROugh instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Franklin Institute, Department 1-A, Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

MEN WANTED FOR DETECTIVE WORK. $100 A month. Experience unnecessary. Write Jas. Ganor, 7309 Calumet, Chicago.

AMBITIOUS DETECTIVES, EXPERIENCED or inexperienced, send 6c at once for particulars. Standard Detective Bureau, 1015 Commercial Exchange, Salt Lake, Utah.

BE INDEPENDENT—BE YOUR OWN LOCAL Boss; secret service; experience unnecessary. Write Ludwig Norton, Pa.

WANTED—RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS; $75 month. Write Franklin Institute, Dept. W 170, Rochester, N. Y.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

FOR MONEY MAKERS AND MONEY SAVers DIAMOND Jewelry or High Priced Watches, come to Chicago. Tell me what you want to work a few hours during one week. No obligation. No expense. Address Box 60, get them. Children and Curiosity Seekers should not answer. JACKES, Branch 1, North State St., Chicago.

A RARE OPPORTUNITY MAKE COMFORtable living. Sell Dr. Scott's Electric Hair Brush. Any sewing machine. Steady. No canvassing. Two trifling samples. Send 6c for samples. Returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Co., Independence Bldg., Chicago, Illinois.

LADIES—MAKE SHIELDS AT HOME, $19 per 100; no canvassing required. Send stamped envelope for particulars. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Mich.

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOTS IN NEW SEAPORT, TEXAS CITY, on Galveston Bay, landlocked harbor, most growing city in Southwest. Millions spent by Government on inter-coastal canal, harbor improvements, docks, factories, mills. Proposed $10,000,000 oil refinery plant. Fourth seaport in U. S. in cotton exports. Really investment. Terms only $1 per lot cash, $2 monthly. Prices only $150. Closing out. Write for maps and illustrated literature. C. A. Bryan & Co., owners, 1st Floor First National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

MISSOURI FARM LANDS

ATTENTION, HOME-SEEKERS—IF YOU DEsire cheap land, for homes or investment, address Stanton A. Missouri Immigration Bureau, Springfield, Missouri.

TYPEWRITERS

TYPEWRITER PRICES SMASHED. "SPOT Cash" Quarte will save you money. L. C. Smiths, Olivers, Remingtons, Underwoods, Royals, etc., your choice of 500 machines at $10.00 to $15.00. Guaranteed for 3 years. Send today for descriptive circular. Dearborn Typewriter Exch. Dept. 2-L, Chicago.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$7.50 MAY MAKE YOU $750.00. LOTS IN Arlington, Chamblee only $10 cash, $1 monthly before co-operative well is drilled. Near the big Atlanta fields, where millions have been made. Write for free literature. Triangle Oil Co., 407 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to write these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—either yourself—to buy, sell, or exchange goods or services are offered here.

MAKE MONEY MANUFACTURING SUMmer drinks, soaps, perfume; 400% profit. Formulas and secrets furnished. Experience unnecessary. Reynolds Specialties, 3569 Rhoden, Chicago.

LISTEN: TEXAS REAL ESTATE COMpany has something to offer. It want the address of energetic people everywhere. Investigate; you will be glad. Dr. Elliott, Henrietta, Texas.

$10 INVESTMENT IN LAND AND CO-OPerative oil well may make $1,000; payments $10 monthly. Write for literature. Mutual Oil Co., 725 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

$5,000 IN CASH PRIZES GIVEN AWAY FOR a name and slogan. Particulars free. Address Lasta Company, Parkway Bldg., Philadelphia, Pa.

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$2 TO $500 EACH PAID FOR HUNDREDS of coins dated before 1895. Send ten cents for New Illustrated Coin Value Book. Get posted. It may mean your fortune. Clarke Coin Company, Le Roy, New York.

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MAKE $50 AFTER SUPPER! WRITE MOVing picture plays; correspondence course not needed. Send for free booklet "B". The Producers Association, Kansas City, Mo.

WRITE MOVING PICTURE PLAYS—$50 each. Correspondence courses unnecessary. Details free. Atlas Publishing Co., 344, Cincinnati.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS.

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24 MONEY MAKING SECRETS! ALSO INteresting magazine, prepaid 10c. National Specialty Co., 392 Chicago.

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THOROUGHBRED FOXHOUND PUP. 2 MO. old. $2.00 pair. Fairmont Kennel, Red Lion, Pa.

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LADIES, WHY WORRY EACH MONTH? Take one of our tablets every night and never worry. Safe, harmless. Month's supply for 50 cents. Welch Medicine Co., Dept. 6, Chula, Ga.

DON'T SUFFER FROM ITCHING, BLEEDing piles. Permanent relief guaranteed. Hundreds testimonials. Special offer, dollar box 75 cents. Write today. Pilo-Remedy Co., Aurora, Ill.

LADIES, WEAK, RUN DOWN, NERVOUS? Write today for a trial package of Hercules, the wonderful upbuilding tonic. M. Oswald Co., 218 West 46th St., New York.

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MARRY—FREE DIRECTORY WITH PHOtos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

LOVING PERF. POWDER WINS LOVERS. Perfume, Face Powder guaranteed. Lady agent, anybody. Sealed 25c. Union Box 109, Chicago.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS PRETTY GIRLS. Descriptions and directory. New Plan Co., 1140 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Mo.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE. BEST PUBlication for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 29, Nyack, Connecticut.

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GET MARRIED; LARGEST MATRIMONIAL magazine published. Mailed free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed free. The Correspondent, Joplin, Mo.

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MARRY—CATALOGUE WITH PHOTOS AND description free. Pay if suited. Select Club, Box 1411, Lansing, Mich.

LOVERS' SACHET WINS YOUR SWEETheart without delay. Powder and its "secret" 10c. Lovers' Exchange Sta. A, Newark, N. J.

WIDOW, 26, WORTH $40,000, WOULD marry. "B," Box 584, Messenger, Los Angeles, Cal.

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GENTLEMEN: 10,000 LADIES WISH TO correspond with you. Membership 10c. Curtis Club, Terre Haute, Ind.

"4 OVERS' EXTRACT." MARVELOUS, POWerful. Guaranteed, harmless. Sealed, one dime. Scientific Extract Co., Akron, Ohio.

MEN, POSTCARDS YOU LIKE. FRONT views, 6 for 15c, 12-15c. State age. Bill Rex Specialty Co., Kalamazoo, Mich.

HUNDRED WAYS TO KISS, 25C. HURLEY 178 Winslow, Buffalo, N. Y.

A TEMPERAMENTAL COW.

She was a cow of high degree,
She proud bovine aristocracy;
Six volumes formed her pedigree,
A coat of arms completed that.
Her form was thin, her blood was blue,
The both of these her milk was, too.

She had a hifalutin name,
A haughty mien, a crumpled horn,
She was a cow-colonial dame.
And viewed all lesser breeds with scorn
On infants' food we raised her calf—
She gave not milk enough, by half.

Nor would she yield the scant supply,
Of lacteal fluid, blue and pale,
Unless a ratbird nurse stood near by
And a physician held her tail.
The milkmaid—her it moved to wrath—
Must have an antiseptic bath

Her boudoir—she would scorn a stall—
Was hung in silk the hue of dawn;
Choice aquarelles adorned the wall,
The furniture was Sheraton.
An orchestra soft music played
While she was tended by her maid

Her food was predigested bran,
Rolled oats and water sterilized.
She ate upon the five-meal plan,
And every bite she fletcherized.
She wore a dressing gown of silk,
And gave about a pint of milk.

We kept that admirable cow
Until bankruptcy forced her sale
No trained nurse could handle her now
And no physician holds her tail.
She left us all in sad seclusion—
Just seven dollars as plain "beef!"

* * *

NEEDED A KEEPER.

She was a very pretty girl. Blake had noticed this fact before he elected to sit at that particular table at the lunch club, and after watching her cheeks above the table and her slender white fingers joined. On this graceful structure rested a delicate pointed chin. Her blue-gray eyes, heavily lashed, were gazing dreamily off into space. She made a charming picture. Nevertheless, Blake gave a startled jump when she remarked suddenly, but with extreme earnestness: "I believe I'll start a fire."

It must be confessed that this seemed a rather cryptic beginning for a conversation with a total stranger, but, as I have said, she was a very pretty girl and after his first start of surprise Blake recovered himself with commendable promptness.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but were you speaking to me?"

The girl glanced up, then unclasped her dainty hands and dropped them into her lap. After a short preliminary struggle she leaned back in her chair and broke into a laugh.

"There," she said, "I knew I'd do it. Talking to myself, I suppose. Perfectly crazy. Would you mind telling me what I said?"

"Not in the least," responded Blake gallantly. "I think it was something about alcohol."

She laughed again and Blake smiled in sympathy. "It's my skirt," she explained. "I got an awful spot on it, and I've been wondering how I could get it out. I never have any luck with gasoline," she concluded mournfully.

"As a steady diet I think I prefer alcohol myself," agreed Blake.

Even Blake didn't think this was so very funny, so he felt flattered and cheered when his wise-a-cre broke into a really amused little giggle. It encouraged him to make a further sally. "You'll have to consider carefully, though," he said, "before you risk making an inebriate of that young and innocent garment."

She looked out at him then, she smiled. "There's really nothing young about it," she explained. "It's an old thing and I hate it, but I can't afford to get another one now, so I suppose I've got to get that spot out."

She began to put on her gloves, and in a moment rose from the table.

"I wish I knew more of first aids to the injured," said Blake.

"I wish so, too," she agreed. "It's certainly a most terrible spot and I'm worried to pieces about it." She nodded in a bright and friendly way as she tripped off.

For days Blake haunted that particular lunch club without again encountering the young woman of the spotted skirt and dancing gaze and had about given up hope of seeing her again when one evening as he was wabbling toward the door of the suburban train which nightly carried him to his suburban home, he was unceremoniously brushed aside and temporarily unbalanced by a large, haughty, irate person, dressed in many expensive and expansive garments. Blake recovered his balance in time to see her tap angrily upon the shoulder of a young woman just ahead of him.

"My umbrella, please," she boomed commandingly.

The eyes which the girl turned upon her assailant were the very eyes that Blake had been loking for. The owner of them looked at the other woman in momentary blankness, then down at the umbrella she held in her hand.

"My goodness! Oh, my goodness!" she cried, the hot color flooding her soft cheeks. "I never knew it! I beg your pardon. I didn't know—really I—it was a mistake—I'm an awfully absent-minded! I know I'll be arrested some day. It was so stupid of me—"

Giving a very fair representation of the careless of war rampant, the owner of the umbrella snatched her property and prepared to retreat with it. "I've had such cases of stupidity before," she said, emphasizing the final word viciously. She stalked back to her seat and at this juncture the girl's eyes met Blake's amused ones. With a little squeal of mingled mirth and embarrassment she turned and fled down the steps of the car and away into the darkness.

Several mornings after this Blake, having taken a train somewhat later than usual, was agoused from his absorption in his paper by a distressed voice from across the aisle.

"I don't know what to do." It was saying. "I positively crazily picked this thing up instead of my purse, and I haven't any money or any ticket—or—or —anything."

The voice sounded familiar, the tale like one he had heard before. Blake peered shamelessly around the conductor's broad back. It was, as he had suspected, the girl of the two previous adventures. Once more their eyes met. Once more she blushed a lovely, embarrassed blush. Then she collapsed into a little giggling heap. "Look!" she said. "This is what I brought instead of my purse."

It was a very dainty, fluffy, pink and white bedroom slipper.

"I suppose," she said, when the conductor had been settled with and gone his ways, and Blake had boldly moved across the aisle and seated himself beside her, and they had brought to light a number of mutual acquaintances, "that you think I need a keeper."

"I do," said Blake, earnestly.

* * *

A Very Thin Man.

"The leanest man I ever knew," T. A. McNeal says, when he's reminiscing, "used to live down on Owl Creek. He was a tall man, and I suppose that he hadn't an ounce of fat about him. The fact was that he had had the ague right along for fifteen years when I first met him. He had a chill regularly every afternoon at 4:15 o'clock. It got so that people in that neighborhood would set their clocks and watches by Link Binder's chill. If the town clock said 4:05 o'clock when Link's chill commenced, the janitor of the building they had brought to light a number of mutual acquaintances, "that you think I need a keeper."

"I do," said Blake, earnestly.

* * *

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Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1895, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Public opinion is never tongue-tied.

Be good and you'll be happy—maybe.

The worst thing we can take for a cold is advice.

Silence is a virtue that is frequently overlooked.

Some men are born foolish and some fall in love.

The more dollars you get together the louder they talk.

Fish are wise. They begin business on a small scale.

He has a treacherous servant who serves only himself.

A man has no real kick coming when his wife talks to herself.

An old bachelor says that matrimony is the best cooking school.

Anyway, we admire a cheerful idiot more than we do the other kind.

It is easy for a man to behave after he breaks into the has-been class.

Many an expert swimmer has been drowned in the sea of matrimony.

Religion is a good thing that never cuts a wide swath in a horse trade.

The man who flirts with trouble is apt to get it where Uncle Bill got the carbuncle.

Probably a new-born babe cries because it discovers the mistake it made in getting born.

The road to success is open to all, but too many want to get there without the trouble of going.

The average man displays a lot of enthusiasm when he gets a chance to talk about himself.

When a man tells a joke to half a dozen women and they all laugh but one, that one is his wife.

Most people would rather blame a man for what he doesn't do than give him credit for what he does.

Every man who thinks he does all the work he is capable of doing would probably do more if offered a bonus.

It is more satisfactory to go and turn something up than it is to sit down and wait for it to turn up of its own accord.

Before congratulating yourself when you come out on top, bear in mind that the froth on a glass of beer does the same.

Woman has an advantage over man in buying hats. When she finds a shape to suit her she can arrange her hair to fit it.

This would be a delightful old world to sojourn in were it not for the fact that too many people are always trying their best to do their worst.

Home and Health

Fashion Notes.

Flat picture bats of leghorn are among new models

Charming poke bonnets are fashioned of crepe or chiffon.

Evening gowns generally have no sleeves, or very tiny ones.

Jackets to correspond nicely with the full skirts should be short.

Small flat bows of braid like ribbon are seen on smart little hats.

Bell sleeves and bishop sleeves are style innovations for waist fashions as well as for gowns.

Short skirts for day dresses and trained gowns for evening wear are the last style specifications received.

Old-fashioned checked silks in snuff colored browns, green and yellows and blacks are novelties in dull-toned effects.

Even though the high waist line will be fashionable, the normal line will be the controlling position for belt lines this season.

The new flowered sash ribbons are used for making costly waists. The colors are rich almost to the exception, but in they are all of the silks called chine, that is, where the design is so woven as to give a broken, shaded effect, and not in the least gaudy. A pale corn color, for instance, has a wheat-and-poppy pattern in soft shades of red and light yellow. The sash has a border of rose-pink satin, and when the waist is made, this edge forms small revers in front, while has a surface of black, shaded with smoke gray. The pattern is of sprawling red roses and green leaves, and the satin border is black.

Needlework.

It was a clever woman with a little daughter to dress who, when copying a French model with hemstitching at the tunic border and the band panel, bethought her of the possibilities of hemstitched chiffon veils. They come in lovely colors and by both long enough and wide enough for tunic effects.

Do not buy cheap thread or sewing silk. Breaking and knotting and coloring fade. For hemming or stitching use O or OO silk. Many sewers do not know that there is a finer thread than A. For gathering a coarse buttonhole twist is more easily handled than double sewing silk. Never draw a thread through a needle, as it is sure to pull; rather take two threads of equal length, putting both through the eye at once.

Damask centerpieces are pretty and in good taste. Many clever needlewomen outline the flowers and design of the damask with a dainty stitch so as to form a border around the circular piece, and with an edging of heavy lace this makes as effective a centerpiece as could be desired. Damask, however, is by no means cheap, but if one can make a number of such pieces from old linen with only the trifling expense of the lace one can have one of three centerpieces.

Recipes.

REMNANTS OF HAM WITH ASPARAGUS—Take equal quantities of cooked asparagus cut into bits and cold cooked ham chopped into small pieces. Cut the asparagus by hand before cooking. For each cup of material make a sauce of two tablespoonfuls each of butter and flour, a cup of the liquid in which the asparagus was cooked and a teaspoonful of lemon juice with salt and nutmeg to taste. Add two beaten eggs, also the ham and asparagus. Turn into individual casseroles, or cups, buttered; cover the tops with buttered cracker crumbs and bake in oven to a golden brown. Serve in the casseroles as a luncheon dish or as an entree.

WELSH RAREBIT—Two cups of grated cheese, half cup of milk, yolks of two eggs, salt and pepper, cayenne to taste; toast carefully square slices of bread; put cheese and milk in hot butter then, plunge into a bowl of hot water, place in a heated dish, and stand in the oven to keep warm while you make the rarebit; put the milk in a granite saucepan, stand it over a moderate fire; when boiling hot add the cheese, stir constantly until the cheese is melted, add salt, pepper and yolks of eggs, and pour over thin toasted bread; if the rarebit is stringy and tough, it is the fault of cheese not being rich enough to melt.

Health Notes.

Castor oil becomes tasteless if beaten thoroughly mixed with the white of an egg.

Tincture of myrrh is a good thing in the water used to rinse after brushing your teeth.

Apply glycerin to a scald directly the accident occurs and cover it up with strips of rag soaked in glycerin.

The juice of a lemon in hot water on awakening in the morning is an excellent liver corrective, and for stout women is said to be a flesh reducer.

One tablespoonful of baking soda mixed with one-half glass of water and applied with a soft cloth is good for pimples, fever blisters, burns and poison from ivy.

Before you deal too severely with your little sons and daughters because they are irritable or because they do poorly in their studies, be sure that it's not some fault in their physical condition that is to blame.

For the Housewife.

When sealing fruit butters or preserves, place a circle of thin cloth on top and sprinkle this with ground cinnamon. The spice prevents the mold from accumulating on the fruit.

Suede shoes that are spotted from rain can be renewed by the simple method of rubbing with an emery board the spots matted together by the water.

When you have woolen veil for dinner, save the water in which it was washed, as it is a splendid tonic for plants. Roses and geraniums especially are improved by this treatment.

If, in preparing asparagus, the tough ends of the stalks, instead of being thrown away, are stripped of the hard outside skin, they will be found when cooked to be as tender and palatable as the rest.

Inexpensive water colors can be used in many ways. Used very thinly on pasteboard boxes, they can be restored and made to look like new. The paints can also be used to freshen tinted canvas, or to color white ones.

Carpets are brightened and color preserved if wiped with clean cloth wrung out of salt water.

Ventilation of Public Buildings.

The ventilation of our public buildings has not had enough thought paid to it. One of the greatest mistakes is that those who are in charge of our courthouses and churches fail to thoroughly air them immediately after the buildings are vacated. The exhalations from the lungs and the emanations from the body, being light, will float for a while in the atmosphere before falling to the floor, and if the windows be opened at once or that a current of air crosses the building, many of them will be carried out. If, however, as is usually the case, the windows are not opened for some hours, maybe not until the next day, these particles, settling upon the floor, are not carried away, but when the building is again occupied they are disturbed by the feet, lifted up into the atmosphere, and inhaled by the lungs from which they had been exhaled the day before.

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SCHOOLBOY SOLDIERS

Or, SAVING THE NATION

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER IV.

THE PERIL.

ENGINEER CAVENDISH was sitting in the easy position, watching his force of laborers work in the cut. He noticed that their former haste was no longer so much in evidence. They used spade, pick and hammer too well to be faulted, but their extreme bustle was now lacking, and he vaguely wondered why. The day had been a scorcher, especially hot, and they were filling in the afternoon after a long rest at midday.

"No understanding a Chinaman," he mused lastly.

Gravel grated behind him and he turned and saw David Baldwin. He gave a slight start and smiled a welcome.

"Well," he asked, "have you found any? The words were hardly out of his other railroad way?"

mouth when he noticed that the face of the young engineer was flushed with heat and plainly very weary, and something else impressed him still more forcibly.

"Mr. Cavendish," was the quick reply. "I've got to leave you. In a few hours I am off for the United States."

"You are—what?"

"Our country is about to be invaded by a horde of Asiatic barbarians, an army that plans to burn, plunder and conquer, and our soldiers have no warning. I'm off for California."

"Great Scott!" gasped the chief, half convinced at the start, and yet looking ready to be sure that he had not surcrossed by overexertion when rest was needed.

"I've seen them." David proceeded rapidly, "and I've heard them. War is at hand, and the main blow is coming from a point not suspected by our military men. I must go with a warning."

"Sit down, David, and let me get at the meaning of this," Cavendish directed gravely. "Tell me all about it. Sit, my lad!"

The newcomer obeyed, and then he told the story in swift, clear-cut sentences, explaining how he had gone to the outer Pacific and seen the drilling men and heard the talking at the foot of the uplift. Reaching the point already touched upon, the chief of additional words between the Japanese and the Mexican, and then summed up in fundamental regard.

"The yellow men of the East and the Mexicans have joined hands to invade, overrun and conquer the United States," he said. "The plan includes not only vast money tribute, but the loss to us of the Southwest, from the coast of California to the eastern side of Texas, four States in all. Yes, and the Japs will be behind the Philippines and the Hawaiian Islands."

"But this army here—the men that you saw? Surely, there are not enough to make the invasion, and our warships will see that no more come when once the warning is received by us."

"Not enough?" David repeated. "Do you know how many are here? I don't, but this I do know. For years Japan has been preparing for the actual clash, and this is how she has done it. Great numbers of her soldiers have been brought to Mexico and hidden in the wild places. They have come in a small degree as sailors, and openly, but mostly by stealth."

"But how? A ship packed with Asiatic soldiers would be spotted at once."

"Not when packed with Asiatic cunning, sir. The way has been to use merchant ships. Such vessels have left Japan laden, it was claimed, with innocent goods, the commercial products of the East, but they were packed below decks lies. They were packed below decks with soldiers, and these were landed in Mexico."

"Whew!"

"Such ships have left various ports openly in some cases, with formal clearance papers, while in other instances they have sneaked out of mere nooks in the Japanese coast and once unseen have by themselves. Some were openly listed for the west coast of Mexico, but others had clearances papers for the ports of South America. All, however, on reaching the right point, shifted their helm, made for the Mexican coast and discharged their cargoes of soldiers. They have been at it for years, and the uninhabited, mountainous regions of Mexico are full of men—how many I don't know—but enough to pour into California in a great flood."

"And unexpected."

"Unexpected!"

"Is it possible?"

"Ask the cunning of Japan."

Cavendish shook his head in sober silence.

"You see now what will happen if no warning is conveyed to our country. Before we could get an army together the invaders would overrun California, burn San Francisco and other cities, and meanwhile the Asiatic transports would be pouring more men upon the California coast."

"Certain men among us have always held that no army could be landed on our shores."

"Such men did not take into consideration the fact that Japan had only to make an alliance with Mexico. When that was done her landing place was easy."

"Blind fate!" exclaimed the engineer, angrily. "It is the fault of half of this country always to a have sundry peanut-heads who can't see facts and won't see them, and call us alarmists more noise than a thousand wise citizens."

"Yes, yes!"

"I mean, of course, the men who had preached the doctrine that our country never would be attacked and never could. The peace party! Rot! I call them blind bats!"

"I've got to go, sir."

"So you have, David. Warning must be taken. What will happen then?"

"Ask the schoolboy soldiers!" the young man replied, his face flushing.

"God bless them! They are the only hope. Our regular army is full of brave men, but it is only a mere handful. Ah the high school graduates! Well said, boy. They will respond to a call."

"A million of them."

"When do you go?"

"Right after dark. I must sleep a bit."

"I will let Michael accompany you."

"No. My going must be masked, somehow, and Michael to go would be to arouse suspicion. How can my absence be accounted for so they will be fooled?"

"Ha! I have already laid the rope unconsciously. I didn't want it known that you had left before, so I gave out that you had a touch of fever and were keeping in your tent. Michael is supposed to be nursing you there. We have only to keep up that stratagem. Where shall you strike for? We are in Lower California, and the American border lies before you, but where will you try for?"

"San Diego."

"It will be no easy task to find your way, for you can't take time to cross over to the coast and follow it up, San Diego! Then, at the other corner of California lies Fort Yuma. Reach either point and you will have access to a railroad, but almost a hundred and fifty miles lie between. How can you avoid coming out at some point between where there is no railroad, and, consequently, no means of getting anywhere quickly."

"I'll set my compass for San Diego and trust to Providence, sir."

"I wish I could go with you, but this track I am laying—"

He waved his hand toward the cut where the coolies toiled in the heat.

"This railroad!" David added, with sudden animation. "Mr. Cavendish it was never intended that you should tackle that tough ground farther on that has been worrying you."

"No?"

"No. Not a rail you have laid has been for future settlers. This is a military road, and nothing else, and it is to end a little farther on. It is to transport men and supplies across the point where the Asiatics need them."

Cavendish whistled, and then, after a little he deliberated, had a sudden idea.

"If that is so, why did the plotters get an American engineer to build the road?"

"Ask Asiatic cunning, sir. It was a blind. For anybody else to be at the head of the actual work would have been to have aroused suspicion in the United States, but with an American engineer it looked all right. That they planned well is proved by the fact that nobody in our country has suspected, as far as we know."

"Once more you are clear."

"I think, sir, that you will be kept here some time longer, but when you get information from the alleged stockholders in Europe you can look out that you are not murdered immediately after."

"That is what I thought of, my lad!"

"I'm going to bed now. I need sleep. But as soon as darkness comes I shall be on my way."

"I'll outfit you as well as possible."

Ten minutes later David was asleep in his tent, and Cavendish, outwardly acting the part of nurse to the fear of his ability, but all the while, acting under the intelligence he was preparing what was needed for the flight across the hills to the American border.

Finally night fell and the sky, dim with a mist that swept up from the ocean, cast but little light over the Judas road as the outlying territory. All was favorable for the venture, but one problem remained. Was the party of Americans alone, and had they come from the first, under constant watch from the Asiatics?

Inside David's tent he and Cavendish exchanged a farewell handclasp and good wishes, and then the younger man slipped away, foot-footed, alert, and watchful, quickly fading into the night.

For some hundreds of yards he moved cautiously, and then, feeling himself clear of espionage, he quickened his pace and was fairly under way. Before him was the wilderness, peril, natural hardships, possible danger from the Chinese, and certain danger from bandits.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE DESERT.

A DESOLATE stretch of country where the levels trafted erratically among little upheavals of the shrub-grown earth, a place usually left to the skulking wild beasts and the more loathsome reptiles of the hot regions, and except for these things generally an area of solitude, but now peopled, as it were, by strange sounds.

From the shoulder of a tangled uplift a wagon crept into view, drawn by a pair of mules, and at its heels came men in saddle. A novice would have seen but little more, at first glance, but to the experienced eye a different tale was told.

The vehicle was an army ambulance wagon, and the men—all mounted horseback, though not in full uniform, were soldiers. All but one. With the party and close to its grim, gray man was the easily distinguished as the commander, rode a young girl on a bay horse that picked its way with nicety, and in contrast to the heavier tread of the troop horses. And over all floated lazily the flag of the Union.

The officer drew a deep breath and urged his horse forward a bit faster until it was at the open flap of the wagon.

"How goes it, Alfred?" he asked cheerfully of an invisible person.

"All right, Isaac," was the ready reply from within.

"Strength holding out? No more pain?"

"All O. K. with me. I'm not worrying."

"Oh! you'll make the post in good shape, and we'll have a San Diego doctor right away to back up the services of the post surgeon."

"All will be well when we get to civilization. What I need is rest and a little attention. I'm no hopelessly sick man."

"Not a bit of it, Alfred. Get you into a cool bunk and let the doctor whisper to you and Marcie feed you what you want and you'll be on your feet again in a twinkling."

A few more words passed between the two men and then the rider fell back to the girl's side.

"His voice is certainly stronger," he remarked thankfully.

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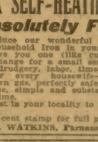

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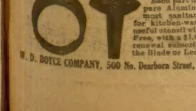

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"I'm sure he is not seriously ill."

"Depend upon it, he isn't. It's only that beastly hole he has lived in, and I'll try to make sure the Government changes his station. No agent should be packed into sun-fire like that back there. I'll explain to the General, and as he's now in San Francisco I'll see him soon."

"You are very good to us, Major!" she said tremulously.

"Why not?" he snapped heartily. "Your father is one of my oldest friends, while you—why, you're a regular trump. I wish I had for my very own. Marcia, pity the woes of a man who has only sons."

"Bless my soul!" the Major muttered, looking hard.

Then, for the first time, the stranger saw what was before him. His face grew red and he saw the flag, and a swift change came over him. His sagging figure grew erect, and he seemed to see from his face, and his eyes took on a new glow. It was as if a new man stood there. Again his eyes moved and he gave sharp attention to the officer. Then he brought his heels together and made a military salute.

"Bless me!" the commander repented.

Recognition flashed to the boy's face.

"Major Pollard!" he exclaimed joyfully.

"Ha!? You know me, and fail to place you—I, who have boasted that I never forgot a face. Who—why, it's somebody who had your motions, your acute fashion of giving the salute—bless me, back somewhere in the past, and I know your face as if it was free from blood and dirt. What? I have it, by George! The Lincoln schoolboy! The young one who knew not fear—a military man when I was in citizen's dress!"

He urged his horse forward, reached out and grasped the boy's hand.

"It all comes back now," he declared. "You are David Baldwin."

"Yes, sir."

"But this is not Lincoln, and you no longer look like a schoolboy."

"There's a story back of that, sir, and there's another story, too, Major, I am hating your detachment, but can you spare me a few minutes of free-talk conversation?"

"As many as you please, my lad. A rest will do us all good. This way."

He led, and then slipped from his mount and stood looking gravely at the companion. A keen judge of men and moods, he felt that no small motive lay back of this request.

"Go right ahead," he directed kindly.

"In a few words, after I graduated I went to Mexico to carry on my profession of engineer, and I was the second assistant to Mr. Cavendish in building a railroad in Lower California."

"I've heard of that road. Well?"

"It is a sham, a lie. It is not for ordinary purposes, but a military way, and designed to carry soldiers and equipments nearer to the California border, so they can pour into our country as invaders. And the soldiers are already in Mexico—Japanese, Chinese and Mexicans—nearly ready to invade. San Francisco and other cities are to be burned, our country overrun, great areas of land wrested from us, and vast tributes of money demanded. Sir, the yellow peril is about to strike!"

Major Pollard drank in every word greedily, his keen eyes burning as he eyed his companion. It was proof of his wonderful composure that he wasted no words in exclamations or useless talk.

"Only our soldiers have the Asiatics in Mexico?" he asked quickly.

"I can't guess within bounds, but I

"Our country is about to be invaded."

should say a hundred thousand surely, and my real belief is, double that number."

"My young friend, how could an army of that size be transported from Japan to this continent and we be ignorant of it?"

"The work has been going on for years, sir. Their men have come partly as ordinary sailors, but mostly in merchant vessels. Such ships have sailed with cargoes said to be goods of trade, but really packed with soldiers like sardines in a box. They are there, for I have seen them, and I've come to bring the news."

The Major indicated a wound in the lad's head from which the blood had slowly oozed.

"I suppose that means that they detected your purpose?"

"I don't think they suspected a thing. I received my wound when almost at the border, and from a bandit, unless I greatly err. I was heading for San Diego, but bore too much to my right."

"This story must be told in detail. Sit there, David, while I get my mess off their horses."

With this the Major moved away and gave the necessary orders. When it was done he returned like messenger.

"Are you hungry?" he asked.

"Rather, for my provisions fell low, but money is money. The water in my canteen gave out, and I've not happened on anything by the way lately."

"I've ordered both for you. Ah! here comes my supply. Good, my lad, and water that was once fresh. Fill up before we talk."

David made it short work, and when he was through he told the story. In plain words he explained what had been done at road-building, and what had come of his trip at Cavendish's direction.

"They are almost ready to invade our country," he finished sharply.

"Where, now," asked the Major, "is the man who said nobody would, or could, invade our shores? You don't know just when they will strike!"

"No, sir."

"They can't be fully ready, for there would be some signs of it elsewhere—signs we might easily mistake, but which can't be mistaken now. An invasion! We have only a handful of regular soldiers. What more, David?"

The boy's eyes flashed with sudden force.

"A million of trained school graduates!" he snapped back keenly.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPY.

POLLARD reached out and grasped the speaker's hand.

"There you have it!" he agreed. "A few years back, their invasion threatened, this country would have been helpless as a baby. We had few regular soldiers and no drilled men to speak of back of them. Regulars and national guard, alone, would have been a small lot, but all is changed since the new system went into effect. The classes that graduated all over the United States at the same time you did at Lincoln, added to the few classes that immediately preceded, place a million trained men at our service. They will be heard from, David."

"Almost to a man, sir."

"The untrained man is a feeble creature in war. He does not know what to do, and can do nothing until he is taught, and months are necessary to make him a soldier. Something more than patriotism is needed. Under present conditions we don't need to waste months. We have—tell me what, David!"

"Ready men, sir!"

"So we have, God bless them! The only hope of the nation now."

The Major fell into thought and David did not interrupt. A few minutes passed, and then Major Pollard spoke again.

"I suppose men will be sent south to investigate, but things will not stand still in the meantime. I have faith to believe that the Government at Washington already realizes the acuteness of the situation, and I know many men do. I surmise there will be a mask for this mobilization. We are having a time of friction with France, and the sensational newspapers are prophesying war with that country. It is all rubbish, for France is our great good friend, but the clamor will answer our purpose well. We shall be set down as preparing for war with France, for the editors will be deceived with such alacrity that they will swallow the bait greedily. I wish—I wish we were as sure of deceiving the Japs."

"A hard task, Major."

"Decidedly hard. Those fellows have brains."

There was a moment of silence, after which Major Pollard wheeled upon the news-bringer.

"How badly are you wounded?" he asked. "And are you sick?"

"The wound is a scratch, and I'm not sick. Only mighty tired."

"That can be cured. We will get you into trim as soon as possible, and then I'll take you with me to San Francisco. The General commanding this department is there, and I must report fully to him. You will go?"

"Gladly, sir!"

"Enough for now. I can give you water, but you need food, rest and sleep, and when we start you shall ride in the ambulance. What you need most is sleep, which also applies to me."

"That is just right."

The Major summoned his orderly and bade him bring food, and in a short time David was free from the smear of his wound.

"We have a sick man in the wagon," Major Pollard proceeded. "Government agent at San Juniper station, and an old friend of mine. I'm going to him on my post. His daughter is along. I'll introduce you."

He led the way, and did the rest in his own peculiar fashion.

"Young folks, be acquainted with each other. Miss Ida, David Baldwin, a fine high-school soldier. And this is Marcia Lander, child of my old friend, and the finest girl in the country."

David hardly did himself justice in the face of that introduction. He saw the girl smile and heard her say something, and he knew that he answered, but his brain was suddenly in a whirl. Marcia Lander! Back over the flashlights to a day in Lincoln when he had found a name written on an egg. That name had been Marcia Lander.

Major Pollard did not permit any real conversation then, for the news he had just heard made him eager to get back to the post and to take further action in the matter. He escorted David to the wagon, introduced him to Mr. Lander, and then, after seeing the messenger at rest, got the troopers under way again.

David lay three minutes in coherent thought, but soon took his grip on things, a medley sauntering through his mind. Lincoln, the high school, the marked egg, the girl in the saddle, the Asiatic men dust below the American border—then the medley ended. David was asleep.

The detachment pulled into the post with the mules swinging along at a lively clip, and the ambulance jolting not a little, while the horses pulled at the rein as they dreamed fond dreams of having the feed-bags.

A few minutes later Major Pollard had the post surgeon with Mr. Lander. Next, David was visited as he sat ruggedly upright in a chair. The doctor dressed his wound and then examined him further in a careless way.

"Nothing the matter with him," was his decision.

"Not a thing!" asserted the boy, with stubborn decision. "Major, I'm all ready for work."

"You shall certainly have your fill, but we must use method in our doings. We are, fortune willing, bound for San Francisco, but I have to tell you that city is a long way off. Before we know it we are going, I must telephone the commanding general and have

(Continued on page nineteen.)

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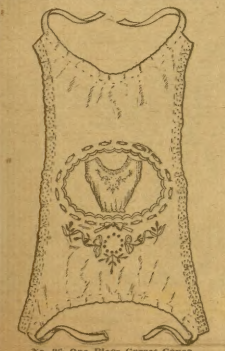

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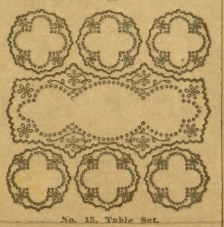

No. 15, Table Set.

NO. 15, TABLE SET.—The most beautiful of all trays and doilies are those which display a great deal of eyelet work. There is nothing more attractive on the dining-room table than white linens embroidered in open work through which the polished wood may show. The pretty set illustrated here shows a dainty pattern that should be carried out wholly in eyelet, both oval and round. The set consists of one large tray, size 8x12 inches, and six doilies to match, size 5½x5½, all stamped on imported Irish linen. This set will be given free with a $1.00 year's subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade or the Ledger.

Schoolboy Soldiers.

(Continued from page eighteen.)

his sanction. Amuse yourself as you wish until I tell you results."

David did not fail to find amusement, for Mr. Lander and his daughter were at hand, and the latter was not busy. Their acquaintance was improved, and good terms came about, but only a slight he dare to mention the marked egg. And the puzzle pressed hard upon him of how a girl in California sent an egg to Lincoln.

When the Major reappeared he announced that he had picked out the General over the wire and received orders to report at once in the city. The start was to be made in an hour's time.

David's clothes hung in rags, but he had money, and soon equipped himself with a respectable suit of clothes. When the train arrived the Major were ready he was also fully prepared.

It was not until San Francisco was drawings that anything of importance occurred. Then the unexpected happened. While evening near, the Major had dropped asleep, and David, sitting by his side, was thinking absent-mindedly when a soft voice stole into his reverie.

"Can you tell me, sir, where I can find a good hotel in San Francisco?"

The words were not addressed to David, but something in the gently insinuating voice impressed him as very familiar. He looked sharply. Two seats ahead a young man was half bending over the single occupant of that seat, and something in his looks proved as familiar as the voice. David wondered why. An answer was returned, and then the first speaker continued.

"I am a stranger in the city, and want to avoid getting a disagreeable stopping-place. I am going there to see about selling a horse."

Room was made for him, and he slid into place. A hotel had been recommended, but the young fellow with business in mind was still talkative, and the listener farther back gathered most of what he said. First of all it was a history of the horse, but presently that matter seemed to be exhausted and he turned the subject.

"You live in the city?" he asked amiably.

"Yes," was the answer.

"A great place, everybody tells me. I always wanted to go to its schools, so as to be wiser. Are you a scholar there?"

"I begin my senior year this fall."

"Ah! books! They are glorious. And now they train you to be a soldier, eh?"

"Yes, sure."

"Fine, fine! But would you enlist if there was need of your help?"

David drew a deep breath. Now he recalled where he had heard that insinuating voice and seen that dark face. Back to Lincoln flashed his memory, and he seemed to be again with Percy Turner and the self-styled French Canadian who wanted to find his friend in the Nebraskan city. That person had reappeared, and again he was questioning a schoolboy.

Now, however, the suspicion of that day became a certainty. The questioner was a Japanese acting as a spy!

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

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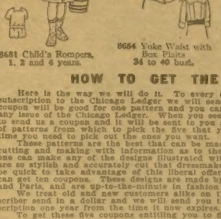

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In the war zone have ordered Allen's Foot-Ease, the antiseptic powder, for use among the convalescent troops. Shaken into the Shoes or dissolved in the foot-bath, it gives refreshing rest and prevents the feet getting tired or foot sore. Drug and Department Stores Everywhere sell it. **Don't accept any substitute.**

Storyettes

A Prescription.

Here is one that was told by Congressman Benjamin G. Humphreys the other night in throwing the harpoon into a medical friend who was a fellow guest at a banquet.

Some time ago the keeper of a museum was engaged in placing some new curios that had just arrived from Egypt when he noticed a perplexed look on the face of his attendant.

"What's the matter, Smith?" he queried, going to the assistant. "Is there anything you don't understand?"

"Yes," answered Smith. "Here is a papyrus on which the characters are so badly traced that they are indecipherable. How shall I class it?"

"Let me see," returned the keeper, examining the curio. "Just call it a doctor's prescription in the time of the Pharaohs."

The Pilot's Excuse.

Captain Smith was owner and pilot of the packet New Orleans, which was plying the Mississippi River. There were miles of rushing waters. Only an experienced eye could tell the channel. Captain Smith had been at the wheel for thirty-six hours. He was exhausted from loss of sleep. Rastus, a colored pilot aboard, was called to the captain.

"Do you see that North Star?" asked the captain.

"Yas, boss."

"Well, hold this boat on that star."

"Yas, boss."

When the captain awoke an hour later his boat was winding in and out among the trees. The captain was indignant. "I thought I told you to hold this boat on the North Star!" he cried.

"Lor', boss, we'se done passed dat star long ergo!"

A Natural Bridge.

Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, discussing a faked mineral water in Washington, smiled and said:

"The manufacturer pretends that the water gushes from a spring instead of from a factory, but in the long run he gives himself away.

"He reminds me of a Western lake that used to have for one of its attractions a small natural bridge.

"A winter storm carried the bridge away and two natives rebuilt it. The rebuilding was well done and perhaps would never have been suspected but for this sign put up at the entrance:

"'NATURAL BRIDGE.
"'Erected by Henry C. and Jacob Clayton.'"

Repartee.

Joseph H. Choate and Chauncey Depew were invited to a dinner. Mr. Choate was to speak, and it fell to the lot of Mr. Depew to introduce him, which he did thus:

"Gentlemen, permit me to introduce Ambassador Choate, America's most inveterate after dinner speaker. All you need to do to get a speech out of Mr. Choate is to open his mouth, drop in a dinner and up comes your speech."

Mr. Choate thanked the Senator for his compliment, and then said: "Mr. Depew says if you open my mouth and drop in a dinner up will come a speech, but I warn you that if you open your mouths and drop in one of Senator Depew's speeches, up will come your dinners."

Its Weight in Gold.

A London visitor at the Lambs' Club recounted a new version of the notable enmity which followed the friendship that had existed between Whistler and Wilde. The latter one day asked the artist's opinion upon a poem which he had written, presenting a copy to be read. Whistler read it and was handing it back without comment.

"Well," queried Wilde, "do you perceive any worth?"

"It's worth its weight in gold," replied Whistler.

The poem was written on the very thinnest tissue paper, weighing practically nothing.

A Natural Mistake.

Toole, the English actor, used to get off a good thing occasionally. At dinner at a country hotel he was sitting next to a gentleman who had helped himself to an extraordinarily large piece of bread. Toole took it up and began to cut a slice from it.

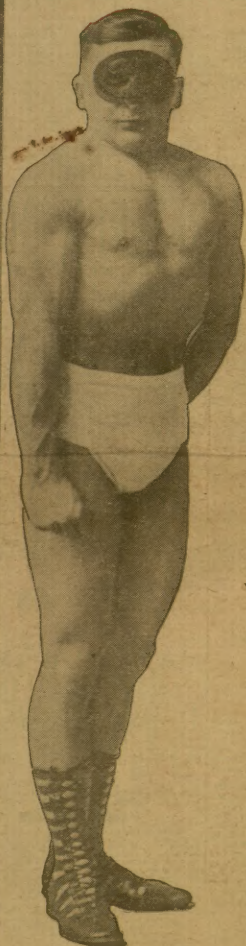
"Sir," said the indignant gentleman, "that is my bread."

"I beg a thousand pardons, sir," replied the actor, "I mistook it for a loaf."

Found Use for It.

A well-known French actor became involved in a discussion with an American, grew heated, drew his card from his pocket, threw it on the table with a tragic air, and stalked out. The American regarded the card for some moments, then took out his fountain pen, wrote, "Admit bearer," above the engraved line, and went off to the theater.

THIN FOR YEARS—
"GAINS 22 POUNDS IN 23 DAYS"



"I was all run down to the very bottom," writes F. Gagnon. "I had to quit work I was so weak. Now, thanks to Sargol, I look like a new man. I gained 22 pounds in 23 days."

"Sargol has put just 10 pounds on me in 14 days," states W. D. Roberts. "It has made me sleep well, enjoy what I ate and enabled me to work with interest and pleasure."

"I weighed 132 pounds when I commenced taking Sargol. After taking 20 days I weighed 144 pounds. Sargol is the most wonderful preparation for flesh building I have ever seen," declares D. Martin, and J. Meier adds: "For the past twenty years I have taken medicine every day for indigestion and got thinner every year. I took Sargol for forty days and feel better than I have felt in twenty years. My weight has increased from 150 to 170 pounds."

When hundreds of men and women—and there are hundreds, with more coming every day—living in every nook and corner of this broad land voluntarily testify to weight increases ranging all the way from 10 to 35 pounds given them by Sargol, you must admit, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Thin Reader, that there must be something in this Sargol method of flesh building after all.

Hadn't you better look into it, just as thousands of others have done? Many thin folks say, "I'd give most anything to put on a little extra weight," but when someone suggests a way they exclaim: "Not a chance. Nothing will make me plump. I'm built to stay thin." Until you have tried Sargol, you do not and cannot know that this is true.

Sargol has put pounds of healthy "stay there" flesh on hundreds who doubted, and in spite of their doubts. You don't have to believe in Sargol to grow plump from its use. You just take it and watch weight pile up, hollows vanish and your figure round out to pleasing and normal proportions. You weigh yourself when you begin and again when you finish and you let the scales tell the story.

Sargol is absolutely harmless. It is a tiny concentrated tablet. You take one with every meal. It mixes with the food you eat for the purpose of separating all of its flesh producing ingredients. It prepares these fat making elements in an easily assimilated form, which the blood can readily absorb and carry all over your body. Plump, well-developed persons don't need Sargol to produce this result. Their assimilative machinery performs its function without aid. But thin folks' assimilative organs do not. This fatty portion of their food goes to waste through their bodies like unburned coal through an open grate. A few days' test of Sargol in your case will surely prove whether or not this is true of you. Isn't it worth trying?

50c. BOX FREE

To enable any thin reader, 10 pounds or more under weight, to easily make this test, we will give a 50c. box of Sargol absolutely free. Either Sargol will increase your weight or it won't, and the only way to know is to try it. Send for this Free Test Package to-day, inclosing 10c. in silver or stamps to help pay the postage, packing, etc., and a full size 50c. package will be sent by return mail free of charge. Mail this coupon with your letter to the SARGOL CO., 100-F HERALD BUILDING BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

If you want a beautiful and well-rounded figure of symmetrical proportions, if you want to gain some solid pounds of healthy "stay there" flesh, if you want to increase your weight to normal—weigh what you should weigh—accept this Free 50c. Package today.

COME, EAT WITH US AT OUR EXPENSE.

This coupon entitles any person to one 50c. package of Sargol, the concentrated Flesh Builder (provided you have never tried it), and that 10c. is enclosed to cover postage, packing, etc. Read our advertisement printed above, and then put 10c. in silver in letter today, with coupon and the full 50c. package will be sent you by return post. Address: **The Sargol Company, 100-F Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y.** Write your name and address plainly and PIN THIS COUPON TO YOUR LETTER.